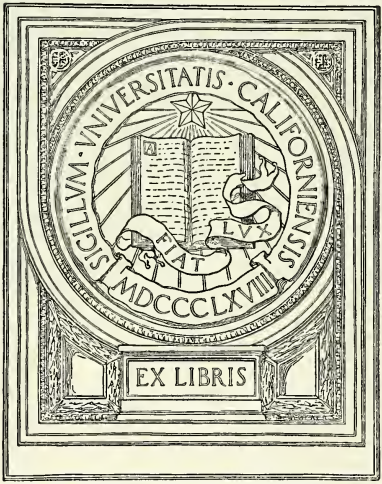
Memoirs of Madame du Barri

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

http://archive.org/details/memoirsofmadamed00lamo

MEMOIRS OF MADAME DU BARRI



(*X. Photo*).

MADAME DU BARRI, WITH HER NEGRO BOY, ZAMOR

From the painting by Decreuze, at Versailles.

MEMOIRS

OF

MADAME DU BARRI

With Eight Half-tone Plates

Lamothe-Langon

New York
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
Publishers

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

DC
135
D8L2E

FRENCH

PREFACE

With the death of Madame de Pompadour, in 1764, was extinguished the star that had guided His Most Christian Majesty Louis XV through some of the most anxious times of his reign. For twenty years she had been the uncrowned queen of France. Every political appointment had been of her choice or had received her approbation; foreign and domestic affairs had been settled according to her undisputed wishes; all documents concerning public or private business had been overlooked by her before being placed before the king; she had spent many weary hours each day with his ministers; and by saving Louis infinite work had ended by making herself indispensable to him. Not only that: when her own charms ceased to attract, Madame de Pompadour had instituted the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and kept it replenished with girls of fitting comeliness. Thus, by intelligence and skill, had this remarkable woman maintained herself in the favour of a monarch as fickle as he was ruthless. It had been no easy task, however, and when Death came—and Madame la Marquise dressed herself in full Court costume to meet him—she was no more than forty-two years of age.

For a while Louis, who had already turned his fifty-fourth year, sought solace in the constant variety of beauty furnished by Lebel, his discreet and assiduous valet. As for affairs of State, Madame de Pompadour had left him with efficient ministers, chief among whom was the Duc de Choiseul. Thus five years passed by; and then Louis began to tire of the insipid, would-be bashful

335642

damsels who came to gratify his whims and vanish again like passing figures in a crowded street. He missed, moreover, the mental stimulant of some clever or impudent woman as his constant companion. Symptoms of the royal unrest and boredom were soon apparent, and were eagerly welcomed by schemers of both sexes, anxious to supply the sufferer with someone to love and cherish and fill the ambiguous post of *maîtresse en titre*. Chief among these schemers was a political faction which well knew that the only force strong enough to oust Choiseul from power would be wielded by the soft hands of some pretty woman.

It was at this propitious juncture, in 1769, that Madame du Barri was introduced to the king's notice by Lebel. The anti-Choiseul party, led by the Duc d'Aiguillon, had long been waiting their chance, and in the dazzling beauty of this little adventuress they saw a fit tool for their purpose. Louis's curiosity was excited in advance, by stories of her charms, and after meeting her at a private supper in his valet's apartments, he expressed his decided approval of the new face, evincing more enthusiasm than had been seen in his jaded eyes for years. Madame du Barri's supporters discreetly fanned this approval into infatuation, and did not rest until the new sultana had been duly presented at Court and installed in Madame de Pompadour's vacant post. From that day until his death, five years later, Louis was a mere instrument in her hands, to be wielded according to the schemes of the men who had put her in power. Choiseul was dismissed, her own creatures were rewarded with lucrative sinecures, and the triumvirate of d'Aiguillon (undoubtedly her lover), Chancellor Maupeou, and the Abbé Terray assumed sovereign power.

It was no ordinary beauty that could capture the heart of a debauchee like Louis ; and Madame du Barri's beauty

was of no ordinary kind. Even her enemies unwillingly conceded that her portraits gave no idea of her voluptuous charm. Her fair hair, so fair that it shone like palest gold, hung in thick natural curls on her classically moulded neck and shoulders. A lock of it is yet preserved, enclosed in a letter she wrote to one of her lovers, and it is of the texture of finest floss. In contrast to this fairness was the delicate brown of her eyebrows, and the heavy drooping dark lashes that almost hid her violet eyes—eyes that were scarcely ever opened to the full, but conquered countless hearts with their long, slow, sidelong glances. She had a small, delicately shaped nose, exquisitely arched lips, and skin that one of her contemporaries likened to a rose-leaf fallen in cream. She never used powder or rouge and laughed in good-natured contempt at those fine Court ladies who needed to pencil their eyes and redden their lips in order to make themselves presentable. Her figure was perfect in correctness of line and poise, and her every gesture revealed it in all its allurement. She disliked the stiff formal fashions of Court costume, and was nearly always to be seen, in the king's council chamber or at his supper-table, *en petit robe*, a haze of chiffon and silk insistently suggestive of the boudoir. With all this beauty of face and figure she radiated an aura of luxury and desire, like some vivid Aphrodite, and could inspire even so old a cynic as Voltaire to exclaim, at sight of one of her portraits :

L'original était fait pour les dieux.

What wonder that Louis gave his worn-out heart and shrivelled soul to this wonderful creature, worshipped even her impertinence, as when she called him " La France," and thrilled with pride and delight because this desirable woman treated him as a desirable man rather than as an awe-inspiring king.

The *Memoirs* from which this book is taken appeared in 1829, under the nominal editorship of Lamothe-Langnon. Though written as autobiography, it would, perhaps, be better to say that in those *Memoirs* the editor collected the many reminiscences then current of Madame du Barri and welded them into connected narrative. The facts related are indisputably true, and their presentation through the medium of her personality, a personality which pervades the whole book, throws a light of its own upon that strange and tragic period immediately preceding the French Revolution. The editor of this present volume has added an Epilogue, to round off as briefly as possible Madame du Barri's romantic story.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
PREFACE		v
CHAPTER I.	MY FIRST LOVES	1
II.	A GAY LIFE	15
III.	I MEET THE KING	27
IV.	TRIUMPHS AT COURT	45
V.	SCANDAL AND INTRIGUE	61
VI.	THE PARC-AUX-CERFS	80
VII.	WOE TO MY ENEMIES	93
VIII.	THE KING'S FAMILY HATE ME	110
IX.	MY ENEMIES ARE AWAKE	119
X.	STRANGE STORIES	136
XI.	A DIFFICULT CASE	162
XII.	MY POWER IN PERIL	178
XIII.	A NEW LOVER	193
XIV.	HIS MAJESTY IS BORED	204
XV.	THE KING DIES	218
XVI.	BANISHED FROM COURT	230
XVII.	AN AFFAIR OF JEALOUSY	245
XVIII.	QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE	259
XIX.	THE REVOLUTION	279
EPILOGUE		291
INDEX		300

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Madame du Barri, with her Negro boy Zamor	*Frontispiece*
	To face page
Louis the Fifteenth, King of France	32
A Dinner Party at Madame du Barri's Chateau at Luciennes	64
Etienne François, Duc de Choiseul	96
Madame du Barri, as Diana at the Bath	128
Marie Antoinette, at the age of seventeen . . .	164
Madame Sophie, Daughter of Louis XV . . .	224
Madame du Barri and the Duc de Cossé Brissac . .	256

Memoirs of Madame du Barri

CHAPTER I

MY FIRST LOVES

I was born on the 28th of August, 1744, at Vaucouleurs. Much has been jokingly said at various times of my having first seen the light of day in the same village which produced Jeanne d'Arc. The wags would have had a more prolific theme had they but known that my mother enumerated amongst her female ancestors the illustrious heroine of Orleans. So much for my mother's side. As to my father's family, it was by no means despicable, although some most contemptible things have been said of it. The Vaubernier family, to which my father belonged, came from very good citizens and even of petty nobility.

My father, having no fortune, had been compelled to accept a mean situation as clerk at the Barrières. He married my mother, who was no richer than himself, for love. When I came into the world, Madame Dubreuil, wife of the guard of a diligence at Vaucouleurs, who was attached to my parents, proffered her services as my godmother. But fortune, who doubtless already favoured me, had destined for me another godfather. The war of 1744 brought to our village M. Billard du Monceau, a financier, and a man at once rich and benevolent. He came to Vaucouleurs on the day of my birth. Madame Dubreuil, only considering the interest of the family, resolved to turn over to him the responsible honour. He

accepted it. I had then for a godfather M. Billard du Monceau, who did the thing in a handsome manner, as might be expected from a man of his wealth. I should not forget to tell you that I was baptized by the name of Marie-Jeanne.

As I grew up I became handsomer every day; at least they told me so, and, considering all things, I do not refuse to believe that such was the case. It is to my face alone, and I know it, that I am indebted for my elevation; and now that my beauty is daily becoming less and less, it is not without regret that I remember what I have been. Decrepitude inspires me with horror—I think I would rather be dead than ugly. Let me quit such distressing thoughts.

Fortunately for my vanity, I was not the only person who thought me handsome, and my beauty gained me all hearts. It was which of our neighbours should make most of me, caress me, and testify their admiration. Everywhere I was welcomed, and my company sought. How happy was I in those days!

At the time I was fifteen my father earned enough for our subsistence, and no more. My godmother was dead. As to my godfather, he seemed to have forgotten his pretty little god-daughter. They wrote to him, but he returned no answer; they wrote to him again, and then came some well-sounding phrases, full of promise, but nothing more. Time glided on, and our situation was still the same; that is, very dull, and pinched as to means. This was not all—a greater misfortune was in store for us. My father, the sole support of the family, died. To the bitter regret of his loss was added the chagrin of the frightful situation in which we were left. A mean stock of furniture, and a few trinkets of no value, was all that remained.

After the moments dedicated to grief, the persons who

took an interest in us, or pretended to do so, advised us to go to Paris. There we should find, they told us, ample resources. On the one side, my uncle Ange Gomart, who had been for some time in the convent of Picpus, and on the other M. Billard du Monceau my godfather, were bound decidedly to assist us at this juncture. Moreover, our ambition was necessarily bounded, and consequently easily satisfied.

We went to live in the environs of the Place Royale, in a street of which I forget the name, but remember well that it was sad, dull, and silent. Apartments were cheap, and we were not far from the convent of Picpus, in which, as I have already said, resided Father Ange Gomart de Vaubernier. My mother informed him of our arrival, and he came to see us on the following day. I remember that my mother wept much whilst the monk preserved a calm air—his piety, he said, forbade any outward demonstrations of inward sorrow. I believe, for my own part, that he felt but little regret for his brother, and felt much embarrassment from his sister-in-law and niece. However, he allowed nothing of this to appear; he told me, after an embrace, that I had the face of a cherub, and advised my mother not to lose a moment in soliciting the protection of M. Billard du Monceau.

My lovely face, my locks, which waved most enchantingly over my eyes, which were melting, sparkling, and liquid as crystal, my mouth, small and red as a cherry, my delicately-formed nose, my excessively fair skin, my elegant and sylph-like figure, in fact the perfect beauty of my person, made my mother conceive the greatest hopes of success. "She is so lovely," said she, "that her godfather cannot abandon her." My uncle, for his part, had equal expectations; whilst I feared that I should not realize their wishes, and I told them so most ingenuously. They reassured me, instructed me, and when my mother

had dressed me as becomingly as my scanty wardrobe would allow, we went most magnificently in a hackney-coach, for which my uncle paid. We reached the house, and went upstairs. Good heavens! how much was I dazzled on entering the rich apartment! The beautiful ornaments! The handsome carpets! I dared not walk over them. What glasses! What furniture! What porcelain!

Here we were, then, in the private apartment of M. Billard du Monceau. Père Ange, who was the most eloquent of the party, opened the conversation. When he had finished, M. Billard du Monceau said some words of consolation to my mother, undertook to defray the expenses of my education, and promised my mother to procure for her the situation of housekeeper in some high family; he then wrote down our address, and bade adieu to us.

My mother left the house of M. Billard du Monceau more satisfied respecting my fate and her own. The following week Père Ange came to inform us that our Providence had found a situation for my mother, a situation in the family of Madame de Renage, widow of a farmer-general. I was placed in a boarding-school in the Rue des Lions Saint-Paul. There I learnt to sew, of which I knew but little previously, as well as to mark and embroider. They taught me how to read and write tolerably; I was instructed in the Catechism, the Bible, and arithmetic.

My godfather, who was attached to me, took me from school and sent me to the convent of Sainte-Aure. I was a gainer by this change, for my education was more carefully attended to than it had been previously. I was fifteen years of age and very lovely, the most so of any of the young ladies of Sainte-Aure, but I was at the same time so free from affectation, so gay, so lively, so

loveable, that they excused the loveliness of my countenance in consequence of the goodness of my heart. Besides, we were all united by the irksomeness of a convent life.

I formed at Sainte-Aure a close intimacy with a boarder of my own age, tall, and a brunette, named Geneviève Mathon. Her father was the most celebrated pastry-cook in the Rue Saint Martin. Another of my companions was Brigitte Rubert, the daughter of an attorney-at-law, who demeaned herself always like a high-born dame, and I, like a fool, liked her better than all the world beside. The worthy Geneviève Mathon was rather jealous of the preference; but if Geneviève was not my best beloved friend, I was always the best beloved friend of Geneviève.

We were indeed "Pickles" in petticoats, and what is worse, downright hypocrites. But we are all so, we are always so, we women. Thanks to the education men-folk give us, we learn to cheat whenever we choose, and the greatest fool of us all can make a man believe that black is white.

However, I was still *innocent*. There was a something passing within me which told me that I was not formed to live alone, but that was all I knew.

I remained at Sainte-Aure until my sixteenth year. At this epoch my godfather, having taken me from the convent, inquired what situation I wished to be placed in. In accordance with my replies I was apprenticed to Madame Labille, milliner in the Rue Saint Honoré, near the Oratoire and the Barrière des Sergents. I now commenced a new existence, under the name of Mademoiselle Lançon (for my uncle had desired me to take this name), and was almost emancipated, almost free. On Sunday, which was entirely at our own disposal when we were not left in charge of the shop, we went out very frequently to carry articles of millinery which had been ordered. My first walks in Paris were not taken without fear; however,

on the second Sunday of my new existence I formed the bold project of paying a visit to my former friend, Geneviève Mathon, who a week before me had returned to her paternal home. I entered, and saw Geneviève occupied in her father's kitchen. She saw me, and jumping with joy, ran to me, and covered me with kisses. She introduced me to her family, who gave me an invitation to dinner, which I accepted. Opposite to me was seated a tall, handsome young man, with dark eyes and brown hair like Geneviève. It was her brother. Perhaps it was because I loved his sister that I so soon took a liking for him. I looked at him from the corner of my eye as secretly as possible, and found his glance was fixed on me. He anticipated my slightest wishes, and offered me beforehand what I was about to ask for: I wished to drink, and instantly he poured out wine for me: I desired some particular morsel, and the same moment I found it on my plate. His attentions embarrassed me, for I feared lest his family should consider them as peculiar; but they took no notice, or rather viewed it only as a natural and proper gallantry.

The family kept me as long as they could. They took me for a walk on the boulevards, and after the walk we went to the theatre. It was the first time such a pleasure had been presented to me; it so completely laid hold of my mind and imagination that I almost forgot the presence of the brother of Geneviève. Seated by my side, he was only thinking how he should express his love for me. One instant (when no one was observing us) he attempted to squeeze my hand; and I, without reflection, without intention, lightly returned the pressure of the hand which retained mine. He trembled, and then his countenance beamed, his large black eyes sparkled like fire, and a beautiful smile played upon his lips.

This day of enchantment, this delicious evening, had its

termination. My friend and her brother wished to escort me back to Madame Labille's. Geneviève, on quitting me, embraced me: Nicolas Mathon, still timid, contented himself with kissing my hand. This kiss penetrated to my heart. I call to remembrance all who have adored me; it is not poor Nicolas who pleased me least. I, too, have known what first love is!

The image of Geneviève's brother pursued me sleeping or waking. Half the night was spent in a long sleeplessness: at length I fell asleep, and the adored image appeared to me in my dream. The next day, when I had to go into the shop, I had lost my liveliness, my usual buoyancy of spirits had forsaken me, I was dull and pensive. This change astonished my companions, who inquired the cause of my evident depression. I blushed, stammered, hesitated, and at last explained myself so ill that the young ladies of the shop, who had great experience in such matters, were unanimously of opinion that I was in love. I denied it as well as I could, and keeping my secret to myself, determined not to allow it to escape. At that moment I raised my eyes, and through the window of the shop saw Nicolas Mathon, who was walking in a most melancholy mood in the Rue Saint Honoré. I remained stupified, with my eyes fixed immovably on the young man who was walking up and down the street, and endeavoured to smile upon him. He saw me, the blood mounted to his cheek, and he showed me a paper he held in his hand; it was a letter, I felt sure, a letter to me! The first love letter! How impatient was I to possess it! I made him a sign to approach, which he understood. A lady entered the shop, and, profiting by the bustle which was thereby occasioned, I glided into the passage, and thence gained the door in an instant. Nicolas started when he saw me so near to him. "Is it a letter from Geneviève?" I asked him, with much confidence. "Yes, mademoiselle,"

he replied, in a faltering voice, and gave me the letter, blushing deeply as he did so. I concealed in my corset this precious treasure, and regained the shop before my absence had been perceived.

I was certain that M. Nicolas would not delay coming again to the house, nor was I mistaken; for about ten o'clock he was at his post. This time, without leaving the shop, I contrived to throw a letter to him, which he picked up and then departed triumphantly. From that time, every morning and every evening, he passed the shop. Matters went on thus until the following Sunday. I then dressed myself as becomingly as possible, and consulted my glass a long time, to convince myself that I should please. I was pretty, very pretty. The hour of our emancipation arrived. Madame Labille had gone early in the morning with her family to Versailles to see some fête. I let all my companions go out before me, and each was awaited in the street, one by a brother, another by an uncle, the third by a cousin. I went out the last, and scarcely set foot in the street, when I looked about me on all sides. Nobody! I was walking by chance and pensively towards the Rue de la Ferronerie, when suddenly I heard behind me someone walking who sighed. I stopped, turned round; it was Nicolas! He accosted me, and I passed with him all this happy and innocent day, and afterwards found opportunities of giving him many meetings. Our interviews were brief but delightful. I thought really that I was the happiest of women, and Nicolas obtained all from me. He owed this only to a true feeling, and I am certain he was not the less willing to marry me.

One day a *mousquetaire* entered the shop with much importance. I never saw any person more grand, more inflated, than the Comte d'Aubuisson, for that was the name of this hero, who, himself alone, made more noise

than a whole regiment. His insolence, which I took for grandeur, had a prodigious effect upon me. He came to order the prompt completion of a hat for the Duchess de Villeroi. The Comte d'Aubuisson was little, but well made, with a handsome face: not very bright in intellect, but perfectly satisfied with himself and all he did, considering himself as the most noble, most amiable and finest man of his day.

There was not one of the girls at Madame Labille's who did not desire to attract the *mousquetaire*. I had the honour to obtain the preference; he told me so, and that with so lofty an air that I dared not tell him that my heart was another's. Besides, how could I resist a *mousquetaire*, who perhaps sacrificed a duchess to me, perhaps ten, and as many countesses and marchionesses? Poor Nicolas was then forsaken. I forgot that with him an honourable marriage would crown our loves. Had I listened to my heart, it would have guided me wisely, but I abandoned myself to my vanity, and my vanity destroyed me.

As much as my first lover had endeavoured to preserve my reputation, so much did the second aim at compromising it. He had neither peace nor rest until he had completely blazoned the affair to the whole world. I lent myself to all his whims; I went to see him at the quarters of the *mousquetaires*, and then he introduced me to his comrades, who congratulated him on the conquest of so pretty a girl. I know not what I did, my head was no longer my own. In vain did Madame Labille, who loved me sincerely, give me good advice; I listened to nothing, I would hear nothing.

The Comte d'Aubuisson did not love me, and I found it out when it was too late to profit by it. I resolved, however, to show him that I had no more attachment to him than he had to me. I left him as I had found him,

through vanity. There came to join the *mousquetaires* a young Biscayan, tall and well made, with beautiful eyes, pale complexion, but so timid and so simple that his companions treated him with sovereign contempt. Well! it was on him that I cast my eyes, to satisfy my vengeance. "There is no worse water," says the proverb, "than stagnant water." The proverb is correct. This *mousquetaire*, so cold in appearance, was ardent, bold. He saw that I wanted an avenger, and offered himself. I had reason to be content. Our connexion was not lasting. My new lover, having learnt the death of his father, was obliged to leave me. He was the third!

I had attained my eighteenth year. Père Ange Gomart, who was not satisfied with me, wished me to lead a steadier life, did not spare his remonstrances and advice, and imagined, to withdraw me from a dissipated life, it would be best to place me with a Madame de Lagarde, in the capacity of companion. He managed matters so well, presented me in such a felicitous moment to this lady, who was always whimsical and pettish, that I pleased her I know not how, and she agreed to receive me into her house.

I was now received in an honourable house, where the wealth of the mistress attracted a numerous and brilliant society. At first I was much embarrassed, feeling that I was not in my place. That was natural enough; the change was too sudden for a young woman of my age, to pass from the counter of a shop, in a few hours, to a drawing-room in which the first company assembled. I was sufficiently prudent to preserve a profound silence, and to study how I could lose the commonplace habits I had contracted.

My abode with Madame de Lagarde was of the greatest advantage to me. This lady received the most distinguished in the city and court. The highest nobility often

came to visit her. I studied them, listened to them, and with so much effect that in a short time I could talk and comport myself without appearing ridiculous.

Madame de Lagarde had two sons, the elder had succeeded his father in his post of farmer-general. He was young, insolent as a page, foolishly fond of pleasure, generous without nobleness, prodigal without honour. His brother, a *maître des requêtes*, called M. Dudelay, was the wit of the family; always powdered, curled, and trimly dressed; precise in his movements, his conversation, and attitudes.

The two brothers saw me admitted into the familiarity of their house without uneasiness. My face did not alarm them; on the contrary, I soon found that I pleased them much. At first, however, they contented themselves with showing me only slight attentions, lest they should awaken the suspicions of their mother. But in her absence they recompensed themselves for the forced respect they assumed in her presence. As soon as one of them met me alone, in the garden or elsewhere, he began to paint his feelings in the most glowing colours. I listened to their advances with an innocent air, and, as well as I remember, received their double declaration on the same day, and with but a few hours' interval. I felt no preference for either, and thus it was easy for me to behave so that neither of them was driven to despair. I was thus beloved by two brothers; and, that I might not embroil them, I so contrived that neither doubted but that I loved him with a reciprocity of affection.

Here permit me to make a slight digression, to describe some of the celebrated characters who frequented the house of Madame de Lagarde.

The first, whose name is at the nib of my pen because I saw him yesterday, is M. de Marmontel. This man never pleased me; he was always pedantic, always

ensconced in his literary dignity, always having an air of meditation, that he might be esteemed a profound thinker. M. de Grimm also came to the evening parties of Madame de Lagarde. He was a cunning fox, witty, though a German, very ugly, very thin. There was in his large eyes, which were half out of his head, a sinister light, and something that prejudiced you against him, but his title to the appellation of philosopher made him received everywhere. I am sure he never loved anything in all his life, neither his friends nor his mistress; he loved himself too well for that. He was a despotic dandy. He covered with white paint his face, which was tanned and wrinkled, and that so evidently that he was nicknamed *Tyran-le-Blanc*; never was a name better deserved or applied.

Diderot was another of the flatterers of my protectress. Good heavens! what skill was there in his bluntness, what calculation in his enthusiasm! How did he lay out for effect, and how much art was there in his simplicity! At bottom he was an excellent man, provided his self-love was not irritated, but unfortunately his self-love was wounded on the slightest occasion. D'Alembert, who was apparently on the closest terms with him, was, in fact, scarcely so in reality. They could not bear each other, they mutually tormented each other about their reputation, which was nearly on a par: with them the vanity of the author put to flight all philosophical modesty. M. d'Alembert was like a cat, he had agreeable little ways, engaging little manners. He exercised his malice whilst he sported, he caressed whilst he scratched, and put out a paw of velvet to the grandees whom he hated. But there is one above all others whom I must mention. This is Voltaire. What reputation did he enjoy, even whilst living! what glory did he attain! This mighty genius had all eyes in France and Europe fixed upon him. For my part I am so great an enthusiast that I would

never perceive his faults. I shall again mention him and the letters he wrote to me, which I have carefully preserved. If I would have given them to Beaumarchais he would have received them with much pleasure. I did not care to do so, and thus Beaumarchais only printed what all the world knows. By means of these letters I might have set M. de Voltaire and the Choiseuls by the ears: I have not done so, nor ever contemplated such a thing.

To return, however, to my own affairs. Despite my liaison with the two brothers, I had surrendered my heart to the handsomest scamp of a fellow, sixteen years of age, that I had ever seen. Noel had the impudence to tell me that he loved me, and I had the weakness not to fling him out of the window. One night someone suddenly knocked at my door. I was alarmed, lost my presence of mind, and answered as chance dictated. A voice, which seemed like that of a woman, told me to open the door immediately, as it was Madame de Lagarde. Still more alarmed, and thinking that Noel had got away (he could have done so by a little door), I opened the door. Someone entered; it was the amorous *maître des requêtes*. He took my hand and imprinted on it a kiss, he prayed me to listen to him and not to make a noise. I uttered a cry, he in his turn became frightened, and tried to go out, and as he did so, he struck his nose against the door, which I closed as quickly as possible. The next morning, at Madame de Lagarde's, when he was endeavouring to explain how he came by the mark that decorated his nose, I could not prevent myself from laughing at him. But later in the day I received billets even more tender. My pardon was entreated for the great boldness, and an interview was solicited.

It was impossible to avoid the Messieurs de Lagarde entirely; either in the garden or the drawing-room I

met them continually. They stopped me to pour forth their declarations, and, perhaps, at last began to suspect that each was chasing the same game. Noel, to whom I sacrificed everything, made me wretched by his incessant jealousy. I had told him all, and showed him the letters they had written to me, as well as my replies, and sometimes we concocted them together at our nightly meetings. He knew, therefore, that, yielding to so much perseverance, I had accepted a rendezvous of M. Dudelay. What does Noel ? He gets a friend to write a letter to M. de Lagarde, and in this letter told him the hour and place when and where he could surprise me with his brother. I, ignorant of the treason, went to the assignation, which was at the Salle des Marroniers. M. Dudelay was not slow in joining me, and was kissing my hand when his brother, coming from behind a tree, advanced towards us. He reproached me with my duplicity, threw a packet of letters to his brother, and quitted us. M. Dudelay took the letters and cast his eyes over them. Imagine his vexation when he saw that these letters were precisely the same as his own. He called me all sorts of names and left me. I had gone up into my own room when they called me down to Madame de Lagarde, to whom her younger son had told all. She spoke to me as I deserved, and ordered me to quit her house on the instant.

CHAPTER II

A GAY LIFE

There were then at Paris two charming sisters, the Demoiselles Verrière. They bore the sceptre of the highest gallantry, and, the better to ruin their adorers, they had gambling tables. Their *salon* was the meeting-place, if not of the best, certainly of the most brilliant society. Great lords and rich financiers abounded at their house; and as handsome women are always in requisition where there are financiers and lords, I went to the house of the Demoiselles Verrière. It was there that I saw, for the first time, the Chevalier de la Morlière, a wretch dishonoured by a thousand villainous transactions, and who was received because he was a desperate fencer. A man of perverted talent, capable of most things, he had assumed to himself the post of tyrant of the pit at the *Comédie Française*. He was gallant and attentive to females, but it was only to cheat those who listened to him. He played, and always pocketed the money won, without ever handing over the money lost. Such was the Chevalier de la Morlière, whom I could not bear, though he did me the honour to single me out. After my elevation, he took his station amongst my enemies, and is one of those of whom I have the greatest right to complain.

Since I am in a mood to talk of celebrated personages, I must mention the Prince de Soubise and the Chevalier d'Arc, natural son of the Comte de Toulouse. The Chevalier d'Arc, with refined manners, a perfect figure and countenance, and all the externals of a man of rank, was intrinsically as worthless as the Chevalier de la

Morlière ; he was a real *roué* in the full sense of the word. I will give a trait of his effrontery. He had some reason, I know not what, to complain of the Duchesse de la V——, his mistress. What did he do ? He cut off a portion of one of her letters, in which were some very significant phrases with her signature, and placed it under a glass which was in the centre of a very large snuff-box, decorated richly with diamonds. He placed this trophy negligently on the table where he played, and all comers could read with ease the extravagancies of the duchess. The chevalier asked nothing better, and it caused a most notorious scandal. The king was informed of it, and sent to the Chevalier d'Arc one of his gentlemen-in-waiting, with an order to have burnt, in his presence, the paper on the snuff-box, and what else remained of this peculiar correspondence. The whole conduct of the chevalier accorded with this one anecdote.

The Prince de Soubise was the worthy companion of the Chevalier d'Arc. In spite of his immense fortune, the charms of his wit, the mildness of his temper, and the intimate confidence of the king, he was neither esteemed in the city nor the court. Never was there a more plebeian great man. He was always to be found where there was estimation to be lost and contempt gained. He was not content with haunting notorious places, he supported them.

After having made this disclosure of others, I ought to make my own. I did not confine myself to the character of an observer only at the house of the sisters Verrière. I formed an acquaintance with M. Radix de Sainte-Foix, a small financier, as I then learnt, and a great filch, as I have subsequently discovered. He was gallant, witty, and agreeable, but his company soon disgusted me. I was sure that I should not want protectors, but as my affairs were in a tolerably good state, I was in no hurry. Feeling

that I was borne out by my beauty, I raised my thoughts somewhat high. I went to the houses of many women of quality, where useful connexions could be formed. There were suppers every evening, and frequently dances; nothing but pleasures and feasting.

It was in one of these houses that I met Jean du Barri, then known as the Comte de Serre. He was about forty, or five-and-forty; but, with his bad health and bad humour, might have been judged older. He was a man of good family, allied to all the first-rate persons of Gascoigne and Languedoc. He was not wealthy, and lived in that sort of aristocratical indigence so common in the provinces. The Comte de Serre had married a wife of easy and respectable circumstances, but induced by the liveliness of his passions, and the desire of pushing his fortune, he had come to Paris, where, being without resources, he had incurred debts, and paid them from the profits of the gaming table. On the one side you would see a man of high temper, swearing like a trooper, taking coarseness for ease, a gambler, fond of women and wine, and regularly tipsy seven times a week. Reverse the coin, and you find a generous heart, with a fine taste for the arts, a player, opening his purse to whomsoever needed it; and on the least hint of a friend, ready to give the last sixpence.

From our first interview he obtained a powerful ascendancy over me. In vain did I seek to overcome it; I was really under the influence of a charm. Comte Jean, by which title I shall in future designate him, thought me handsome, and proposed an unchained alliance, of which he would defray all the expenses, and I was to enjoy all the pleasures. I accepted it. We lodged in the Rue des Petits-Champs, opposite the Rue des Moulins. We received a great deal of company, but my companion was not at all jealous, he watched more over his own interests

than my conduct. He was a man of wit, only saw what it was necessary to see, and only understood what it was requisite for him to understand; and I, thanks to this conjugal kindness, led the happiest life in the world.

I was one day crossing the Tuileries, when I saw that I was followed by a young man of very agreeable exterior. He walked close to me without accosting me, but keeping a profound silence until I reached my house, facing the Rue des Moulins. I was much annoyed, and went to the window, whence I saw him in the street walking up and down and gazing from time to time on my house. I looked at my unknown, and asked myself why he pestered me, and if he were enamoured of me, why he was so silent. I was dying with desire to enter into conversation with him, and went into the narrow walks of the Tuileries, hoping that he would then accost me, but no: he followed, accompanied me like my shadow, but still preserved unbroken silence.

I had a waiting-maid, a young Norman, not less giddy than myself, and almost as handsome. She knew all my affairs, and was never tardy when it was in her power to oblige me. When I had returned home I called Henriette, and pointing out to her my unknown, told her of my excessive desire to know who he was and why he followed me.

"Oh! mademoiselle," said Henriette, "that is easy enough; you have only to ask him, and with your permission I will go at once and accost him."

I looked out through the blind of the window. She accosted the young man, talked to him with much earnestness, made him a low curtsy, and tripped away from him. I met Henriette in the antechamber. When she entered I exclaimed, "Well!"

"Well! madame, he is either a madman or a very dangerous character. He told me that he did not

follow you, nor was he thinking at all about you. Why tell such lies? *Ma foi!* I mistrust the young fellow."

I formed instantly a thousand conjectures, each more ridiculous the one than the other. However, two days afterwards, the weather being very fine, although the morning air was cool, I resolved to walk out. It was just close upon the winter of 1767. I went towards the Champs Elysées, when suddenly a grey and cold fog came on, which became momentarily so dense that I could not distinguish an object at four paces. However, I continued my walk, not without some alarm, when I heard someone walking close behind me. I turned round in some fear and found myself face to face with the unknown.

"Sir," I exclaimed, "what do you seek? I have done you no harm, why do you follow me thus?"

I spake thus, and the unknown endeavoured to force a smile. He took my hand, and after having kissed it respectfully, said to me in a voice, gentle but firm:

"Mademoiselle, promise to grant me the first reasonable favour I shall ask of you, when you shall be queen of France."

At these words I found I was talking with a madman, and instantly replied:

"Yes, sir, I will grant you what you ask, when I shall be queen of France."

I could not help smiling disdainfully as I said this, and he, perceiving it, said:

"You think me mad, I know, but I pray you have a better opinion of me. Adieu, mademoiselle. There will be nothing more extraordinary after your elevation than your end."

The unknown pronounced these words with an air of inspiration, and, saluting me respectfully, disappeared in the density of the fog.

On my return home, my head full of this adventure, I could not forbear detailing it to Comte Jean.

"Queen of France!" said he, "that is somewhat singular. This worthy has odd ideas, but there have been things more wonderful."

"Why, Jean, I begin to suspect the steadiness of your brain, as much as I did his. I queen of France? What can you be thinking of?"

"Why, not exactly queen, perhaps, but ——, like Madame de Pompadour, for instance. Does that seem improbable to you?"

Thus, it was a prediction that inspired Comte Jean with a project which seemed to me impracticable, but which he has so successfully realized. From that instant he thought of nothing but the means by which he could make me queen after the fashion of Madame de Pompadour. As for me, I abandoned to him the dreams of future greatness, and continued to pass my life giddily, living from day to day without fear of degrading myself by anticipation.

I was alone one morning in my apartment when Comte Jean entered. He had a thoughtful air and walked with long strides up and down, rubbing his hands and talking to himself.

"I wish the devil may choke your unknown, whose prophecy has made me grasp at a phantom. He has put an idea into my head, and I shall not be content until you have given me the king of France for a successor."

"Have you forgotten who I am?"

"A very lovely woman, capable of turning a stronger head than the king's. He must be wearied with the monotony of his amours. They only introduce maidens to him, or women who pretend to be so. Then respect twists the neck of all pleasure. They are statues, automata,

destitute of life or soul. Morbleu ! you will know how to behave with a king."

" Oh, as to that you may be sure, king or no king, I shall alter none of my ways for him."

" Good. Now I have a favour to ask of you ; it is that you will to-day look smilingly on the fool Morand, for I believe that to get at the master you will have to pass through the antechamber." And Comte Jean left me laughing.

But who is this M. Morand ? M. Morand is a tall, thin man, nearly six feet, with a broad flat face, neck like a crane, legs of an ostrich, grey eyes fringed with red, a mouth which opens from ear to ear to show five or six teeth, and a vile nose crammed with snuff. He wears a coat of mulberry velvet, breeches of the same ; a waistcoat covered with silver, a sword as long as Charlemagne's, and shoes laden with large silver buckles, ornamented with paste. Behold M. Morand from head to foot. His life is a problem. In the morning, at Court, he is the valet of the king's valets ; and, in the evening, gives suppers at his own house to the high nobility and the prettiest women. He is a wonderful man at uniting two hearts, or calling forth mutual sympathies.

M. Morand came to dine at our house. There were but a few persons present. M. the Prince de Salm, M. de la Harpe the author, the vicar of the Archbishop of Toulouse, whose name I forget, Mademoiselle Guimard of the Opera, M. Morand, the hero of the feast, Comte Jean and myself ; in all seven persons.

My soft smile and tender glances made M. Morand feel ill at ease. Never had he had such a welcome. He opened as wide as possible his little eyes, to look languishingly, and pursed up his cavernous mouth when speaking to me in the most comical squeaking tone possible. After dinner I continued to play my part. Poor Morand could scarcely

contain himself. At length, seeing an arm-chair vacant beside me, he flung himself into it, and whispered in my ear with a tone of transport,

"You are charming!" then returning to his pristine demureness, he continued: "Yes, charming, a hundred times too much so for an old sinner like me; but there is in France a man whose acquaintance would be very useful to you."

"Name him."

"M. Lebel; he is a gallant, gay, fervent adorer of the fair sex, and can be of infinite service to them. Nobody knows him better than I do. I am his intimate friend; we are connected in many transactions, and I will bring him to see you."

"Anything from your hand will be acceptable."

"And you will do well; for the protection of such a man will be of great service to you. But *mum* on all I have said; do not utter a syllable to Comte Jean: he is a brute!" At these words he rose and left the arm-chair.

Comte Jean had seen the tall M. Morand approach me and speak in a mysterious manner. He was impatient to know if the fish had gorged the hook. I told him word for word, and Comte Jean was delighted.

"Good," said he, "all goes as it should do. This ass Morand thinks he is only working for Lebel; he shall strike better game without thinking of it. Lebel knows me already; I could bring him to my house, but would rather he came of his own accord. My dear Jeannette" (this was the name he gave me in moments of tenderness), "be charming, be flighty, throw, if you like, your cap at the ceiling. We are playing for high stakes, and Lebel must be infatuated so that a still greater man than himself may be also infatuated."

Comte Jean and myself expected Lebel with the utmost impatience. Morand had given us reason each week to

expect him to visit us on the week following, but Lebel did not arrive. I was astonished at his daring thus to defer the happiness of the king, or, if they had spoken to him of me, that he was not in greater haste to offer his homage to the Comtesse du Barri. This title and this name had been conferred on me by Comte Jean, about the month of December, 1767. As he had several brothers in Languedoc, he thought he could make it credited that I was married to one of them, believing that the name of sister-in-law could give to our intimacy the excuse which he required for it. Comte Jean saw further than I did. I obeyed him, assumed my *nom de guerre*, and in this way we were prepared for whatsoever should fall out.

One morning Comte Jean entered my apartment, his face beaming with delight.

" Read," said he, giving me a letter, " read Jeannette : victory is ours. News from Morand. Lebel is coming to Paris, and will dine with us ! "

At one o'clock I was under arms, and prepared to receive him on whom my destiny depended. As soon as I reached the drawing-room, Comte Jean compelled me to submit to the test of a rigid examination. His serious air amused me much, as he gazed at me some time in solemn silence. At length his forehead relaxed, a smile of satisfaction played on his lips, and extending his arms to me, without venturing to touch me, " You are charming, divine," he said. " Lebel ought to go and hang himself if he does not fall down at your knees."

Soon afterwards the folding-doors were hastily opened, and a servant announced M. Lebel with M. Morand. The Comte went to meet the arrivals, and I saw Lebel for the first time. He presented him to me in form.

" Sister, this is M. Lebel, *premier de sa Majesté*, who has done us the honour to come and dine with us."

" And he confers a real pleasure on us," said I, looking

smilingly on M. Lebel. My look had its effect, for Lebel remained mute and motionless from admiration at my person. At length he stammered out a few incoherent words, which I imagined to be compliments. The Comte watched Lebel anxiously, and Morand began to rub his hands, saying :

" Well, sir, what think you of our celestial beauty ? "

" She is worthy of a throne," replied Lebel, bending his head before me, and taking my hand, which he pressed respectfully to his lips. " Yes, you are the most lovely creature I ever met, though no one is more in the habit of seeing handsome females than myself."

" And of causing them to be seen by others," replied Comte Jean.

This was an opening which was not followed up by Lebel. His first enthusiasm having passed, he measured me from head to feet, as if he would take an accurate description of my person.

For my part, I began to support the looks of Lebel with more assurance. He was a man of no particular " mark or likelihood," but had made his way. The custom of living at Versailles had given him a certain air of easy impertinence, but you could not discover anything distinguishing in his manners, nothing which concealed his primitive extraction. The direction of the Parc-aux-Cerfs gave him much influence with the king, who found the convenience of such a man, who was willing to take upon himself all the disagreeable part of his clandestine amours. His duties placed him in contact with the ministers, the lieutenant of police, and the comptroller-general. The highest nobility sought his friendship with avidity. They all had a wife, a sister, a daughter, whom they wished to make the favourite sultana : and for this it was necessary to get the ear of Lebel. Thus, under a libertine prince, the destinies of France were at the mercy

of a valet de chambre. I should tell you, however, that I never had occasion but to speak well of him, and that I have the utmost gratitude for all he did for me.

After dinner, when we left the table, Lebel paid me some compliments; then pulling out his watch, spoke of an appointment at the Marais, and left without saying a word of seeing us again. Two days elapsed without being marked by any event. Comte Jean had spent them with much anxiety. He was absent when, on the third morning, Henriette came hastily into my room. "Madame," she said, "M. the first valet de chambre of the king is in the drawing-room, and inquires if you will receive him." At this news I was surprised and vexed. M. Lebel took me unawares; my toilet was not begun. I gave a hasty glance at my mirror, "Let M. Lebel come in"; and M. Lebel, who was on the heels of my maid, entered instantly. We entered into conversation, and I found that Lebel really thought me the sister-in-law of Comte Jean; and I remarked the involuntary respect that attended even his familiarity. He talked some time of my attractions, of the part which a female like myself might assume in France. But fearing to compromise myself, I made no reply, and whilst I kept a tranquil appearance, I was internally agitated at the absence of Comte Jean.

Fortune sent him to me. He was passing the street, when he saw at our door a carriage with the royal livery. This equipage made him suspect a vist from Lebel, and he came in opportunely to extricate me from my embarrassment.

"Sir," said Lebel to him, when he entered, "here is the lady whose extreme modesty refuses to listen to what I dare not explain to her."

"Is it anything I may hear for her," said the Comte, with a smiling air.

"Yes, I am the ambassador of a mighty power: you

are the minister plenipotentiary of the lady, and with your leave we will go into your private room to discuss the articles of the secret treaty which I have been charged to propose to you."

Comte Jean instantly led him into another room, and when they were alone, Lebel said to him, "Do you know that your sister-in-law is a most fascinating creature? She has occupied my thoughts since I have known her, and in my enthusiasm I could not help speaking of her in a certain quarter. So highly have I eulogized her, that His Majesty desires an interview with her, that he may judge with his own eyes if I am an appreciator of beauty. Would you refuse to grant him that pleasure?"

"It would be a crime of *lèse-majesté*," said Comte Jean, laughing, "and my family have too much respect for their monarch. We should not be content with a fugitive favour. But tell me, when is this meeting to take place?"

"Instantly. The king is impatient to see the Comtesse, and I have promised that she will sup with him to-morrow evening in my apartment at Versailles."

"How is she to be introduced to the king?"

"I am to entertain four of my friends, one of whom is the Baron de Gonesse—the king."

CHAPTER III

I MEET THE KING

THANKS to my natural thoughtlessness, no troublesome thoughts interfered to break my rest on the night preceding a day so important to me, and I slept as tranquilly as though upon waking I had no other occupation for my time than a walk on the boulevards, or a drive to the Bois de Boulogne. At length we set out according to our agreement with Lebel. I was closely muffled up in my large calèche—the carriage rolled along till we reached Versailles, where we engaged a lodging ; we alighted, and, after vainly seeking a few moments' repose, proceeded on foot to Lebel, in whose apartments we were to attire ourselves in a suitable manner. We knocked cautiously at a door, which was opened to us with equal caution. Scarcely had we entered than he came eagerly forward to receive us, and with the most ceremonious gallantry conducted me to a private dressing-room, where I found several females waiting to assist me at my toilet. I abandoned myself to their cares, which were, indeed, most skilfully exercised in my behalf. They wrought wonders in my appearance, bathing me after the Eastern fashion, adorning my hair and person, till I issued from their hands blooming and beauteous as a houri.

When I returned to the room in which Lebel was expecting me, his surprise was almost overpowering.

" You are indeed," exclaimed he, " the new sun which is to rise upon Versailles."

All at once the hasty sound of a bell, violently pulled, was heard.

" The object of your attack approaches," said Lebel to me, " it would be as well to reconnoitre a little. Remember, not a word of his rank, no cast-down, timid looks at his sovereign power ; no bending of knees, or faltering of voice."

We thereupon proceeded onwards till we reached the apartment where our invited friends were expecting us ; and here I will digress awhile, in order to say a few introductory words respecting the personage with whom I had the honour of supping.

Louis XV, King of France (or as he was upon the present occasion styled, Baron de Gonesse), was one of those sentimental egotists who believed he loved the whole world, his subjects, and his family ; whilst in reality, the sole engrossing object was *self*. Gifted with many personal and intellectual endowments, which might have disputed the palm with the most lively and engaging personages of the court, he was yet devoured by ennui. Devoid of taste, he esteemed men only in proportion to the number and richness of their armorial bearings. The very mention of a man of letters was terrifying to his imagination from its disturbing the current of his own ideas ; he revelled in the plenitude of power, yet felt dissatisfied with the mere title of king. He ardently desired to signalize himself as the first general of the age, and entertained the utmost jealousy of Frederic II, and spoke with undisguised spleen and ill-humour of the exploits of his brother of Prussia. The habit of commanding, and the prompt obedience he had ever met with had palled upon his mind, and impressed him with feelings of indifference for all things which thus appeared so easily obtained : and this satiety and consequent listlessness, was by many construed into melancholy of disposition. He disliked any appearance of opposition to his will ; not that he particularly resented the opposition

itself, but he knew his own weakness, and feared lest he should be compelled to make show of a firmness he was conscious of not possessing.

Immediately after Lebel had conducted me into the salon he was called away, and quitted us. The king rose and approached me, saluting me with the most admirable gallantry, and addressing to me the most encouraging and gratifying words. His gentle yet polished manners, his fine countenance, noble air, and the free and unrestrained glances of admiration which sparkled in his eyes, communicated to me a feeling of support and confidence which effectually reassured me, and roused me from the involuntary emotion I had felt at the moment when I first appeared in his presence. The king addressed a few words to Comte Jean, and then regarded him steadily, as though he were trying to recall his features; but his eye quickly turned on me again, upon whom he bestowed the most intoxicating attention. Never was first sight more effective, and never did a flame so rapidly increase as did the passion of my noble adorer. Ere we had seated ourselves at the supper-table, he was ages gone in love.

It would have provoked a smile from any countenance to perceive how the respect and admiration with which the three courtiers regarded me increased in proportion as the sentiments of the king towards me betrayed themselves more and more. At first I had been considered as a person of little or no importance. Soon, however, as their sagacious eyes discovered the state of their master's mind, the air of familiarity with which they had regarded me gave place to a more studied politeness, which, in its turn, as matters progressed, was superseded by the most delicate attention; and ere we rose from table these gentlemen watched my looks with the most eager anxiety to obtain the honour of my notice, and hopes of future

patronage from one whom they easily foresaw would be fully qualified to bestow it.

As for me, I talked and laughed with perfect freedom from all restraint, and my frank, unaffected mirth appeared to enchant the king ; I knew that he was weary of the nice formalities of courtly beauty, and desired to refresh his eyes and ears with something less refined, and I gratified him to his heart's wish.

The supper terminated, the king's friends remained some time conversing with us. Whilst these noblemen were busily celebrating my praises in words sufficiently loud to reach the king's ear, the Baron de Gonesse, standing by my side, was prosecuting his suit in the most ardent terms. I received his overtures with becoming grace and modesty. As I have before said, the exterior of the king was very prepossessing, and what he wanted in youth,[1] he made up by all the mature graces of dignified royalty. At last Lebel appeared, and made me a sign to rise from my seat. Up to this period nothing had arisen to betray the incognito of the august monarch, and in order to keep up my pretended ignorance of his grandeur I quitted the apartment with little ceremony. Lebel conducted me to an adjoining chamber, furnished with the utmost magnificence. When we were seated, he turned to Comte Jean, who had followed us, and said, " It rests with yourself whether you will return to Paris, or remain at Versailles. But as for miladi, who seems much fatigued, she will, we trust, honour us by resting at the Chateau."

And here I trust I may be pardoned if I pass over certain details which could not, at this lapse of time, interest or amuse anyone ; besides, although I have found no difficulty in reciting former events of my life, I find my pen more prudish and coy than were my ears or mouth.

[1] Louis was at this time fifty-eight years of age.

All I shall say is, that the following day, so soon as I was left alone in my chamber, Lebel entered, and prostrating himself at the side of my bed:

"Madame la Comtesse," said he, "is queen and mistress here. Not only has your noble lover failed to communicate to me the usual signal of disgust or dislike, but he has spoken of you to me in the most favourable light, declaring, that for the first time in his life, he felt the influence of a true and sincere affection."

"Will he then see me again?" inquired I.

"To-morrow evening, if agreeable to you."

"Only say that his wishes are mine."

The Comte entered, and I saw by the triumphant joy painted on his face that Lebel had told him of the propitious state of things. Inviting him to sit beside me, I related to him and Lebel those particulars which my pen refuses to retrace.

Our conversation terminated, I wished to return to Paris, and I was, without further hindrance, allowed to depart. Scarcely had I arrived there an hour than I received from His Majesty a magnificent diamond clasp, worth at least 60,000 francs, and bank-notes to the amount of 200,000 livres.

Comte Jean and myself were well nigh stupified with astonishment at the sight of such treasures; to us, who had never in our lives possessed such sums, they appeared inexhaustible. My brother-in-law divided them into two equal portions, one of which he put into his pocket, and the other into my escritoire. With this arrangement I did not interfere; nothing seemed to me more simple than that he should satisfy his need out of my superfluity. I bestowed two thousand crowns upon Henriette, and expended in the course of the day at least a quarter of my riches in trifles, as unnecessary as useless; and all this without once remembering that as I owed my present

abundance to a momentary inclination on the part of the king, so the turn of an hour, or a fresh fancy on the part of my munificent adorer, might reduce me to the unprovided state in which I had been so lately.

Early the following day I received a message from the king, accompanied with a bouquet of flowers tied round with a string of diamonds. A short letter was annexed to this splendid gift, which I would transcribe here, had it not been taken from me, together with many others.

Upon repairing to Versailles punctually at the appointed hour I was conducted into the same apartment as before, where I found the females who had then assisted at my toilet again prepared to lend their aid; and from this moment I had a regular establishment of attendants appointed for my use.

The moment the king was informed of my arrival, unable to restrain his impatience, he hastened to me to assist at my dressing-table, and continued standing beside me so long as the operation lasted. I felt greatly embarrassed, not knowing whether I durst take the liberty of requesting him to be seated. However, my silence on the subject was greatly admired and ascribed to my perfect acquaintance with polished life, when in reality it originated from mere timidity. My triumph was complete; the monarch smiled at and admired every word as it fell from my lips, kissed my hands, and played with the curls of my long hair, sportively twisting his fingers amidst my flowing ringlets with all the vivacity of a lover of twenty.

In the morning the king entreated of me not to return to Paris, but to give him my company for the whole week. Lebel made his appearance to beg I would consider myself as mistress of the apartments I occupied, and that he had received orders to provide me with an establishment upon the most handsome scale.



LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH, KING OF FRANCE
From the painting in the Louvre.

Our supper was lively as the first had been. The Duc de Richelieu entertained us with several amusing anecdotes; not that they contained anything very piquant, but the duke related them well, and we were all in the humour to be pleased, and laughed heartily at what he said. Comte Jean, whose eye constantly followed me, appeared perfectly satisfied with all I said or did. As for the king, he seemed enchanted with me, and seemed wholly occupied in watching my looks, that he might anticipate my wants. After supper, in the *tête-à-tête* which followed, he explained himself in terms which left me no doubt how securely my empire over him was established. Had he been less explicit on the subject, the flattering marks of favour, and the adulatory compliments I received from all on the following day, would well have assured me of it. I was no longer an obscure and friendless individual, but the beloved mistress of the king; I was, to use the expression of Lebel, a new sun which had arisen to illumine the horizon of Versailles. I could no longer doubt my power when I saw noble personages present themselves to solicit the most servile employments about my person.

The week glided away, and each day my fortune seemed more fully assured. The love of the king increased, he heaped presents on me perpetually, and seemed to think he never could do enough for me. The bounties of Louis XV were known, and instantly aroused against me two enemies—the Duc de Choiseul and the Duchesse de Grammont, his sister. At first, the brother contented himself with despising me, but the Duchesse was furious; I had offended her feminine self-love, and she could not forgive me. As soon as this noble lady learned my position, she was desirous of knowing who I was, and I have been told since all the measures she took to learn this. She did not confine her search to the circle of

Versailles, but hastened to prosecute her inquiries in Paris with M. de Sartines. The lieutenant of police set all his bloodhounds on my traces. They did not fail to bring him back a thousand horrible tales about me, with which he gratified the Duchesse, who, thinking thereby to do me a severe injury, spread in the Château a multitude of prejudicial tales against me, hoping that they would reach the ears of the king and disgust him with his amour. But these scandals produced no other effect than to increase the attachment he had for me, and to diminish that which he felt for the Duc de Choiseul.

In the midst of this cross-fire of intrigues, one was devised against me which might have terminated in my ruin; but thanks to the indefatigable activity of Comte Jean, it only served to fix me more firmly in my situation. Lebel came to me one day, his face sad, and his look serious. By his manner I augured that my reign had passed, and that I must quit my post. At length he began thus:

"Madame, you have many bitter enemies, who are labouring to effect your ruin with a bloodthirstiness which nothing can assuage. They have now spread a report that you are not married. This infamous calumny——"

"Ah, is that all?" said I with joy. "No, my dear Lebel, this time they do not calumniate me. The worthy creatures for once are right."

"What," said Lebel, in a tone of alarm almost comic. "Are you not the wife of Comte Guillaume du Barri?"

"No."

"Then you have deceived the king, and played with me."

"Lebel, my friend, take another tone. No one has any right to complain. You have given me to the king as a person to please him; I do so. The rest can be no matter of yours."

"Pardon me, madame; it is a matter of the greatest consequence to me. I am terribly compromised in this affair, and you with me."

Lebel told me that the Duchesse de Grammont had bitterly reproached him about the mistress he had procured for the king, adding that it was his duty to make the king acquainted with these particulars, unless I, the pretended wife of du Barri, would consent to go to England, when a large pension should be assured to me.

"No, my dear Lebel, I will not go to England; I will remain in France, at Versailles, at the Château. If I am not married I will be; the thing is easily managed."

Lebel, somewhat assured, begged me to send for Comte Jean, to whom he recommenced his tale of grief.

"You are drowning yourself in a glass of water," said my future brother-in-law. "Go back to the Duchesse de Grammont, and tell her that Madame was married at Toulouse. She will have an inquiry set on foot; in the meanwhile my brother will arrive, and the marriage shall take place. Then we will show the rebels a real Comtesse du Barri; and whether my sister-in-law be a lady of six months' standing or only of yesterday, that is of no consequence to the King of France."

The same evening the whole family arrived, and was presented to me the next day. My two future sisters-in-law frightened me at first with their provincial manners and southern accent; but, after a few minutes, I found that this Gascon pronunciation had many charms. Mesdemoiselles du Barri were not handsome, but very agréeable. One was called Isabelle, whom they had nicknamed *Bischi*, the other's name was Fanchon, and her name had been abbreviated to *Chon*. I was soon much pleased with her, and the king became equally so. He used to make her jump upon his knees; and although she had passed the first bloom of youth, he played with her

like a child. But what most particularly diverted the king, was calling my sister-in-law by her nickname: "*Petite Chon, grande Chon,*" he was always saying, "do this, go there, come here." Louis XV did the same with his own daughters. He had amongst them *Loque*, *Graille* and *Chiffe*,[1] and they were the ladies Victoire, Adélaïde, and Sophie, whom he thus elegantly designated. I so soon saw the taste of the king for nicknames that I gave him one: it was *Lafrance*. So far from being angry with me, he laughed to tears every time that I called him so.

Let me revert to my marriage, which was performed very secretly at the parish of Saint Laurent. I believe the king knew of it, although he never alluded to it any more than myself. Thus the malice of my enemies was completely baulked in this affair.

My friends were excessively desirous for my presentation, which would decide my position at the Château. As yet I only had an equivocal existence, having rank neither at play, theatre, nor public festival; so that if the king should be capricious I could be dismissed as one of the demoiselles of the Parc-aux-Cerfs. The Duc d'Aiguillon, whose attachment was unbounded, calculated accurately all the advantages of this presentation. It would place me on the same footing with Madame de Pompadour, and compel the ministers to come and work with me.

Louis XV was excessively timid: with an air which appeared of a dreadnought quality, he was fearful at heart. The clamours of Versailles kept him in alarm; and he kept at his own court and at foreign courts secret agents, whose only care was to report to him the complaints of the people and the sarcasms and satires of society. By these unpropitious channels the king had learnt all the hatred which was borne to Madame de Pompadour. He

[1] These nicknames may be broadly translated as Rag, Tag and Tatters.

was afraid of exciting the discontent of the people by announcing another mistress, and was no less intimidated at the severity of Madame Louise, and the ill-humour of his other children. He loved his pleasure much, but his ease more.

Each day brought to me impertinences said of me by the noble ladies of the Château. I learnt that they boasted that I should never set foot in the great apartments, but should remain the obscure mistress of the king. This made me impatient, and by degrees deprived me of my natural gaiety.

One day when the king was with me, he perceived my want of spirits :

" What ails you ? " said he, with the greatest solicitude.

" What ails me ! " replied I, " I wish I were dead, rather than see myself the butt of all the scandal of the foul-mouthed gossips of your court."

The king, suspecting the confidence I was about to repose in him, was sorry he had asked for it, and was silent. He began to tattoo with his fingers on the chimney-piece.

" Your Majesty speaks to me," I answered, " with great condescension, but yet you are the cause of the insolences which I am subjected to from the vile crew."

" What is the matter with you to-day ? In truth, you are a perfect little devil."

" I wish I were, that I might punish evil tongues, since there is no King of France to avenge me."

" Well, well, you madcap, what must I do ? Whom must I banish ? "

" Oh, sire, no one : with your august support I fear no person ; nothing but appearances."

" You are an excellent creature ; in your place Madame de Pompadour would have imprisoned half France."

" It is not terror but envy that I would excite. Let

335642

me be presented at court, and all my wishes will be satisfied."

"I cannot for the life of me divine why you should lay so much stress on coming to weary yourself with the ceremonies of myself and my daughters. Heaven preserve you from all the irksomeness of court ceremony!" and the king sighed. "Well," he exclaimed, attempting to force a smile, "well! I will write to the ladies de Grammont, to inform them that they need not give themselves the trouble to remain near me at the Château."

On saying these words I darted towards the door, and went into my chamber. The king followed, and finding there Mademoiselle Chon, who was working at some tapestry, said to her:

"Mademoiselle, I confide to your care, and by oral *lettre de cachet*, the most amiable little devil in France. And now, Mademoiselle du Barri, having nothing further to add, I pray God to take you to His powerful and holy keeping."

After this pleasantry the king, delighted at the gay termination of a somewhat serious scene, went, or rather vanished: for, to use a proverbial expression, he ran like a thief.

The daughters of Louis XV had united against me with a fury which nothing could justify. They were incessantly talking scandal of my past life, as if there were only saints at court, as if they had no pranks of their own to reproach themselves with. All the Château knew of their lovers, and there was *living* evidence of the tenderness of Madame Adélaïde: as for Madame Louise she was an angel upon earth, and was the only one who did not join in the cry against me. On the other hand the king, whilst he had but little love for his dear daughters, preserved towards them a complaisance and external appearance of kindness which was a substitute for paternal love. When Mesdames

Royales cried out, he stopped his ears with his two hands, and seemed, whilst looking proudly at France, to say, "Am not I a good father, and are not my daughters very happy, for I let them cry out with all their might?"

About this time I made acquaintance with M. de Maupeou, the late Chancellor, who, in his disgrace, would not resign his charge. M. de Maupeou possessed one of those firm and superior minds, which, in spite of all obstacles, changes the face of empires. Ardent, yet cool; bold, but reflective; neither the clamours of the populace astonished, nor did any obstacles arrest him. He went on in the direct path which his will chalked out. Quitting the magistracy, he became its most implacable enemy, and after a deadly combat he came off conqueror. He felt that the moment had arrived for freeing royalty from the chains which it had imposed on itself. It was necessary, he has said to me a hundred times, for the kings of France in past ages to have a popular power on which they could rely for the overturning of the feudal power. This power they found in the parliaments, but since the reign of Louis XIII the use of parliaments was finished.

The Chancellor asked me when my presentation was to take place, and why it had not yet occurred. I replied, that the delay arose from the intrigues of Choiseul, and the king shrunk from the discontent of a handful of courtiers.

"I am sorry for it," said M. de Maupeou; "in the first place, Madame, because of the interest I take in you, and also because for His Majesty it would be a means of striking terror into the opposing party. You know, Madame, how annoying parliaments are to all your friends, and with what bitterness those of Bretagne and Paris, at this moment, are pursuing the Duc d'Aiguillon."

"Do you think," I replied with emotion, "that matters are unfavourable towards him?"

"I hope not, but he must be warmly supported."

"Ah! I will aid him with all my influence. He is no doubt innocent of the crimes imputed to him."

"Yes, certainly. He has done no other wrong than to defend the authority of the Crown against the enmity of the parliaments."

We continued some time to talk of parliaments and parliament men: then we agreed that M. de Maupeou should see me again, accompanied by the Duc d'Aiguillon, who should have the credit of presenting him, and he left me with as much mystery as he had entered.

From this moment, and in spite of all that Comte Jean could say against it, a new counsellor was admitted to my confidence. He was the Chancellor. The Duc d'Aiguillon and he were on very good terms, and these two, with the Abbé Terray, of whom I shall speak to you presently, formed a triumvirate, which governed France from the disgrace of M. de Choiseul to the death of the king.

My presentation was a matter of first-rate importance to me and mine. I needed partizans, and the Duc de la Vrillière was gained over to my side, by making him believe that the king would yield to my desires, and that then I should remember all those who opposed my elevation. The Duc d'Aiguillon also drew over to my party M. Bertin, who bore no love to the Choiseuls, and who saw that the preponderance of interest was on my side of the scale. When I was assured of a considerable number of defenders I thought I might venture on the master-stroke, and thus I went to work.

One evening the king was with me, and the MM. de Maupeou and de Richelieu were there also. We were discoursing of different things, and the king was perfectly tranquillized, little anticipating the scene that was in

store for him. I rose suddenly from my arm-chair, and going up to His Majesty, after a profound curtsy, cast myself at his feet. Louis XV would have raised me, but I said :

" No, I will remain where I am until you have accorded me the favour I ask."

" If you remain in this posture I shall place myself in a similar one."

" Well, then, since you will not have me at your knees, I will place myself on them " ; and I seated myself in his lap without ceremony.

" Listen to me, sire," I said, " and repeat what I say to the King of France word for word. He must authorize my presentation ; for else, on some fine day, in the presence of the whole court, I will go the the State apartments, and try whether I shall be repulsed at the door."

" Madame is right," replied the Duc de Richelieu, " and I see that you look for her every evening where she is not, and where she ought to be."

" What ! you, too, Duc de Richelieu ? "

" I would tear out the eyes of these gentlemen," I added, " if they thought differently from me."

" This rebellion," said the king, " cannot last, and I see myself compelled to hold a *lit de justice* (a judicial sitting or bed)."

" And I swear to you, that I will receive nobody into mine until I have been presented."

This sally amused the king, who said, " Well, since it must be so, you shall be presented."

At this I leaped on the king's neck, giving a cry of joy which might have been heard by my rivals. After that, I advanced to the two gentlemen who had advocated my cause so well, extending a hand to each, which they took and kissed with great gallantry.

Louis became thoughtful, and continued to murmur

between his teeth, "I wash my hands of it—they will cry out, they will clamour, but it must be so."

Next day there was a general rumour of my presentation. My friends asserted that I had the king's promise. This was imprudent on their part, and they injured my interest whilst they flattered my vanity. They put the Choiseul cabal to work, who intrigued so well that not a person could be found who would perform the office of introductress. The presentation is effected by the intermediation of another lady, who conducts the person to be presented to the princesses, and introduces her. This custom had passed into a law, and it would have been too humiliating to me to have dispensed with it. This was a dire blow to me: it distressed me sadly, and I wept over it with my friends.

M. de Maupeou, whose good services I can never sufficiently vaunt, came to me one day, and said, "I think that I have found a lady *presenteuse*. I have a dame of quality who will do what we want."

"Who is it?" said I, with joy.

"A Comtesse de Bearn, a litigious lady. with much ambition and avarice. You must see her, talk with her, and understand each other."

"But where can we see her?"

"That is easy enough. She claims from the house of Saluces a property of three hundred thousand livres: she is very greedy for money. Send someone to her who shall whisper in her ear that I see you often, and that your protection can serve her greatly in her lawsuit: she will come to you post-haste."

M. Morand, after having found out the attorney of Madame the Comtesse de Bearn, went to him under some pretext, and boasted of my vast influence with the Chancellor. Madame de Bearn then came to me with M. Morand. Gracious heavens! how simple we were to

take so much pains with this lady: had we known her better we should not have been so long in coming to the point.

"Madame," said I to her, "you cannot be ignorant that I ardently desire to be presented. My husband has sent in his proofs of nobility, which have been received; I now only want a *marraine* (godmother); if you will officiate in that capacity, I shall owe you a debt of gratitude all my life."

"Madame, I am at the king's orders."

"But, Madame, the king has nothing to do with this. I wish to be presented; will you be my introductress?"

"I should like to have half a line from His Majesty as a protection and assurance."

"And that you will not get. The king's signature must not be compromised in this affair, and I do not think I ought to ask for it; let us therefore, madame, cease this discourse, since you ask such terms for your complaisance."

The Comtesse de Bearn rose; I did the same; and we parted mutually dissatisfied with each other.

Thus, then, was my presentation stopped by Madame de Bearn. This mischance did not damp the zeal of my friends. On the one hand, Comte Jean, after having stirred heaven and earth, met with the Comtesse d'Aloigny. She consented to become my godmother immediately after her own presentation, for eighty thousand livres and the expenses of the ceremony. But mesdames received her so unsatisfactorily that my own feelings told me I ought not to be presented at court under her auspices.

We thanked the Comtesse d'Aloigny therefore, and sent her, as a remuneration, twenty thousand livres from the king.

Whilst Comte Jean failed on one side, the Duc d'Aiguillon succeeded on another. He was in some way related to Madame de Bearn. What, I believe, finally

decided this lady was the fear that if she did not comply with what I required, I should content myself with the Comtesse d'Aloigny.

Now assured of my introductress, I only directed my attention to the final obstacle to my presentation; I mean the displeasure of Mesdames. I do not speak of Madame Louise, of whom I can only write in terms of commendation; but I had opposed to me Mesdames Victoire and Sophie, and especially Madame Adélaïde, who, as the eldest, gave them their plan of conduct.

The intrigues carried on by those about the princess delayed this (to me) important day of my presentation till the end of the month of April, 1770. On the evening of the 21st the king, according to custom, announced a presentation for the following day; but he durst not explain himself more frankly; he hesitated, appeared embarrassed, and only pronounced my name in a low and uncertain voice; it seemed as though he feared his own authority was insufficient to support him in such a measure. This I did not learn till some time afterwards; and when I did hear it, I took the liberty of speaking my opinion upon it freely to His Majesty.

CHAPTER IV

TRIUMPHS AT COURT

On the next day, the 22nd, I was solely engrossed with my dress: it was the most important era of my life, and I would not have appeared on it to any disadvantage. A few days previously the king had sent me, by the crown jeweller, Bohemer, a set of diamonds valued at 150,000 livres, of which he begged my acceptance. Delighted with so munificent a present I set about the duties of the toilet with a zeal and desire of pleasing which the importance of the occasion well excused.

Paris and Versailles were filled with various reports. Throughout the city, within, without the castle, all manner of questions were asked, as though the monarchy itself was in danger. Couriers were despatched every instant with fresh tidings of the great event which was going on. Nothing could surpass the impatience with which I was expected. Hundreds were counting the minutes, whilst I, under the care of my hairdresser and robemaker, was insensible of the rapid flight of time, which had already carried us beyond the hour appointed for my appearance.

At length I arrived; and never had I been more successful in appearance. I was conducted by my godmother, who was all joy and satisfaction to see herself a sharer in such pomp and splendour. The princesses received me most courteously; the affability, either real or feigned, which shone in their eyes as they regarded me, and the flattering words with which they welcomed my arrival, was a mortal blow to

many of the spectators, especially to the ladies of honour.

But my greatest triumph was with the king. I appeared before him in all my glory, and his eyes declared in a manner not to be misunderstood by all around him the impetuous love which he felt for me. He had threatened the previous evening to let me fall at his feet without the least effort on his part to prevent it. I told him that I was sure his gallantry would not allow him to act in this manner; and we had laid a bet on the matter. As soon as I approached him, and he took my hand to prevent me, as I began to stoop before him, "You have lost, sire," said I to him.

"How is it possible to preserve my dignity in the presence of so many graces?" was his reply.

That evening I had a large circle at my house. The Chancellor, the Bishop of Orleans, M. de Saint-Florentin, M. Bertin, the Prince de Soubise, the Ducs de Richelieu, de la Tremouille, de Duras, d'Aiguillon, and d'Ayen. The ladies were Mesdames de Bearn and d'Aloigny, with my sisters-in-law. Amongst the ladies presented they were the only ones with whom I had formed any intimacy; as for the rest, I was always the "horrible creature," of whom they would not hear speak on any account.

Comte Jean participated in this great joy. He had no longer reason to blush for his alliance with me, and could now form, without excess of presumption, the most brilliant hopes for the splendour of his house. I did not forget him in the distribution of my rewards; and the king's purse was to him a source into which he frequently dipped both hands. It was now that the king decided on the greatest act of courage he had ever essayed in my favour; it was, to desire the favour of the Duc de Choiseul on my behalf.

The credit of this minister was immense, and this

credit was based on four powerful auxiliaries; namely, the Parliament, the philosophers, the literati, and the women.

The king was fully aware of this unanimity of public opinion in favour of his minister. He was, besides, persuaded that the Duc de Choiseul had evinced admirable diplomatic talents, and rendered France real and important service.

Now, by the act of my presentation, the Duc de Choiseul would be compelled to meet me often, which would render our mutual situation very disagreeable. On this account the king sought to reconcile us, and would have had no difficulty in effecting his wishes had he only had the resistance of the minister and his wife to encounter; but the Duchesse de Grammont was there, and this haughty and imperious dame had great ascendancy over her brother.

It could scarcely be hoped that we could tame this towering spirit, which saw in me an odious rival. Louis XV did not flatter himself that he could effect this miracle, but he hoped to have a greater ascendancy over his minister. It was to the Duc de Choiseul, therefore, that he first addressed himself.

"Duc de Choiseul," said Louis, "I have formed for my private hours a most delightful society. The most attached of my subjects consider themselves highly favoured when I invite them to these evening parties so necessary for my amusement. I see with pain that you have never yet asked me to admit you there. I think that I used to meet you frequently at the Marquise de Pompadour's."

"Sire, she was my friend."

"Well, and why is not the Comtesse du Barri? Who has put it into your head that she is opposed to you? You do not know her: she is an excellent woman: not

only has she no dislike of you, but even desires nothing more than to be on good terms with you. I engage you to sup with me at her apartments this evening, and I flatter myself, that when I wish it you will not coin a parcel of reasons in opposition to my desire."

"I know the obedience that is due to Your Majesty," said de Choiseul, bowing low.

Here the conversation terminated. The Duc de Choiseul did not become my friend any the more, but behaved towards me with all due consideration. He used grace and finesse in his proceedings, without mingling with it anything approaching to nonsense.

M. de Maupeou had told me that he would endeavour to bring Madame la Maréchale de Mirepoix, and introduce her to me, trusting to the friendship she had evinced for Madame de Pompadour during the whole time of the favour and life of her who preceded me in the affections of Louis XV. One day Madame la Maréchale de Mirepoix was announced. The Maréchale, who followed closely on the valet's heels, did not give me time for much reflection.

"Madame la Maréchale," said I, "what lucky chance brings you to a place where the desire to have your society is so great?"

"It is the feeling of real sympathy," she replied, with a gracious smile; "for I also have longed for a considerable time to visit you. I wish to obtain your friendship, and to testify to the king that I am sincerely attached to him."

"You overwhelm me, madame," cried I, much delighted, "and I beg you to give me your confidence."

I had heard a great deal concerning Madame de Mirepoix; but before I heard her speak I had no idea what sort of a person she would prove. She had an air of so much frankness and truth, that it was impossible not to

be charmed by it. The greater part of the time I did not know how to defend myself from her; she was at once so natural and so perfidious; and occasionally I allowed myself to love her with all my heart, so much did she seem to cherish me with all enthusiasm. She had depth in her wit, a piquancy of expression, and knew how to disguise those interested adulations with turns so noble and beautiful that I have never met, neither before nor since, any woman worthy of being compared with her. The king had much pleasure in her company: he knew that she only thought how to amuse him; and, moreover, as he had seen her from morning till evening with the Marquise de Pompadour, her absence from my parties was insupportable to him, and almost contrary to the rules of etiquette at the Château.

I cannot tell you how great was his satisfaction when, at the first supper which followed our intimacy, he saw her enter. He ran to meet her like a child, and gave a cry of joy, which must have been very pleasing to the Maréchale.

"You are a dear woman," he said to her, with an air which accorded with his words, "I always find you when I want you; and you can nowhere be more in place than here. I ask your friendship for our dear Countess."

"She has it already, sire, from the moment I saw her; and I consider my intimacy with her as one of the happiest chances of my life."

The king showed the utmost good temper in the world during the rest of the evening. He scolded me, however, for the mystery I had made in concealing from him the agreeable visit of the Maréchale. I justified myself easily by the pleasure which this surprise caused him; and, on my side, gave my sincere thanks to the Chancellor.

Louis evinced, moreover, plainly the ascendancy I had over his mind. He assisted publicly at my toilet, he

walked out with me, left me as little as possible, and sought by every attention to console me for the impertinences with which my enemies continued to bespatter me. The following anecdote will prove to you how little consideration he had for those persons who dared to insult me openly.

One day at Marly, I entered the drawing-room; there was a vacant seat near the Princesse de Gueménée, I went to it, and scarcely was seated when my neighbour got up, saying, "Disgusting!" and betook herself to the further end of the room. I was much confused: the offence was too public for me to restrain my resentment, and even when I wished to do so the thing was scarcely possible. I was compelled to complain to the king, who instantly sent the Princesse de Gueménée an order to quit Marly forthwith, and betake herself to the Princesse de Marsan, governante of the children of the royal family of France, of whose post she had the reversion.

Never did a just chastisement produce a greater effect. The outcry against me was louder than ever, it seemed as though the whole nobility of France was immolated at "one fell swoop." To have heard the universal clamour, it would have been thought that the princess had been sent to the most obscure prison in the kingdom.

The greatest disagreeableness I encountered was occasioned by the capricious behaviour of the princesses, who sometimes received me with pleasure, and at others evinced a disposition to annoy me in every possible way, according as it suited the whims and wishes of those about them. The following may serve as an instance of their variability.

The Prince de Condé having announced his intention of giving a grand fête at Chantilly, the princesses declared they would not be present if I were there. The Prince de Condé was one of the most subtle courtiers; and as

soon as he was informed of the princesses' intention he came, without any ceremony, to explain the matter to me. This was the first visit he had honoured me with. "Madame," said he, "I had flattered myself you would have embellished Chantilly with your presence; but the beauties of the court, too justly alarmed at the idea of being eclipsed by your dazzling charms, have so successfully manœuvred that they have wrought upon the royal daughters of our august monarch to declare that the beauty of their attending nymphs shall not be effaced by yours. You have too much good sense to see the affair in any but its true light; and the disappointment your absence will inflict on me would be too cruelly felt for endurance, did I not seek to pacify my anxious wishes on the subject by obtaining your promise to pay me a visit when the king next honours Chantilly with his presence."

I felt deeply flattered by the invitation. The Prince continued to pay me several elegant and gallant compliments; and I was, upon the whole, charmed with our interview. However, the king was highly displeased with his daughters' proceedings. "I have a great inclination," said he, "to forbid their going to Chantilly at all. Upon my word, if I were to listen to them, they would fain make of me the same puppet they allow themselves to become in the hands of the greatest simpleton who will take the trouble of leading them."

I endeavoured to appease his anger, by reminding him that he could not expect perfection from his daughters; and that, forced as they were to hear me continually ill-spoken of by my enemies, it was next to impossible they should be able to prevent themselves from adopting the opinions of those around them. "And that," said he, "is what I principally find fault with. What have they to do with apeing the tone of those about them; and what point of their duty teaches them to detest those

whom I love? I will take care to let them know my displeasure."

The king kept his word; and the report in general circulation was, that the princesses had declared their intention of not going to Chantilly; it was further rumoured that I was there, but in a private and concealed manner. This is wholly untrue; the king would never have permitted such a humiliation; nor do I believe I should have submitted to it had he even desired it.

My cousin, the Chancellor of France, had remained to keep me company instead of joining the party at Chantilly. *My cousin*, and by what right or title could M. de Maupeou become such? I will explain. First of all he only aspired to the honour of relationship, but afterwards, turning over the archives of his family, he found the most incontestable proofs of his belonging to the ancient family of the du Barri; and, full of joy, he hurried to me, unrolling at my feet his genealogical tree, to the great amusement of Comte Jean and my sisters-in-law, who, after a long examination, declared that he was justly entitled to the appellation of first cousin; from that period he always addressed me *cousin*, which I flattered him by returning whenever I was in the humour.

The king appeared each day more and more solicitous to render me happy, and even anticipated any wishes I might form. Amongst other marks of his favour, he bestowed upon me the splendid pavillon de Luciennes, sold by the Duc de Penthièvre after the death of his son, the Prince de Lamballe, a charming spot, which both nature and art have so liberally contributed to adorn. I have converted it into the most perfect and delightful habitation in which a mortal could desire to end her days.

About this period the Prince de Condé, whose gallantry never failed, entreated the king to pay a second visit to Chantilly; and it was upon this occasion that Louis

erased from the list of court ladies all those whose presence would be disagreeable to me during our stay at Chantilly. One scene of pleasure followed another, and one fête succeeded another. Louis was never from my side, and appeared solely occupied in gratifying my slightest wish; the princes of the court carefully imitated his example; and such a life as I then led was abundant compensation for all the pains and anxieties I had endured from the malice and jealousy of certain females, as well as the sarcastic bitterness of men who feared that my influence should destroy theirs. I may, with truth, affirm that I received the honours and attention of a queen; verses, plays, all written to convey some praise or compliment to me; and the king testified the lively gratification it afforded him to see me thus an object of general solicitude, as well as of the most flattering distinction.

One day I was conversing with the Comte de la Marche upon the disputes concerning the parliaments, and expressing my fear that, if driven to desperate measures, the people would rise in open rebellion in favour of the magistracy. "They would be still more clamorous," replied he, "if they knew all I could tell them."

"And what do you know more than myself?" asked I. "Your Highness alarms me by speaking thus."

"Amongst events now passed and gone is one that would materially affect the public peace, if known."

"Explain yourself, my lord," said I.

"Did you ever hear of the man who wore the iron mask?"

"Yes, certainly," replied I, "who was he?"

"A great prince, and a most unfortunate man."

"But who was he really?"

"In the eyes of the law the crown of France should have been his; but, in the conscientious view of things, he certainly had no claim."

The Comte de la Marche stopped here; and, as I was not very deeply read in history, I did not exactly comprehend the distinction he had just made. I had frequently heard talk of the Iron Mask, whom people reported to be either allied to, or sprung from the royal family; but all these particulars were confused in my memory. With a view to satisfy myself more positively upon the subject, I availed myself of the first time I was alone with the king to lead the conversation on this story.

At the mention of the Iron Mask Louis started. "And do you really credit such a fable?" asked he.

"Is it then entirely untrue?" inquired I.

"Certainly not," he replied; "all that has been said on the matter is destitute of even commonsense."

"Well," cried I, "what Your Majesty says only confirms what I heard from the Comte de la Marche."

"And what has he been telling you?"

"Very little, sire; he told me only that the secret of who the Iron Mask really was had not been communicated to you."

"The Comte is a simpleton if he tells you so. I know the whole affair, and was well acquainted with the unhappy business."

"Ah," exclaimed I, clapping my hands in triumph, "just now you affected perfect ignorance; you knew nothing at all about it, and now——"

"You are a very dangerous woman," cried the king interrupting me by loud fits of laughter, "and you are cunning enough even to surprise the secrets of State."

"Well, but," said I, "since you really do know all about this Man with the Iron Mask, you will tell it to me, will you not?"

"I should be very careful how I gratified your curiosity," said he; "this is a point in history which must

never be cleared up ; State reasons require that it should forever remain a matter of doubt."

After this partial confession the king implored of me to change the conversation, which I could easily perceive was extremely disagreeable to him. Nevertheless, it seemed to me quite clear that this celebrated person belonged to the royal family, but by what title I could not devise. It was in vain that I afterwards revived the subject ; not during the moments of the most tender confidence could I obtain the information I desired.[1]

The marriage of the dauphin with the Archduchess Marie-Antoinette created the utmost stir at Versailles. Feeling myself but newly established in the king's affections, the idea of the arrival of the young dauphiness filled me with anxiety and alarm. I pictured her to myself, as she really was, young, beautiful, and fascinating : once at Versailles, how could she fail to support the Choiseuls, to be guided by them, and to seek the destruction of my favour. I dreaded her rank, her wit, her many accomplishments, and the influence she might probably obtain over the mind of her grandfather. All these anticipations filled me with dread ; and my friends, who, like myself, feared her arrival, sought by every possible means to irritate me against her, and to induce me to become her enemy before she had shown the nature of her sentiments towards me.

[1] The identity of the Man with the Iron Mask, who died in the Bastille in 1703, is one of the most baffling of historical mysteries. His name was kept secret from the highest officials, and he was buried under the name of Marchiali. It has been suggested that he was the Duc de Vermandois, son of Louis XIV and La Vallière ; the son of Anne of Austria and the Duke of Buckingham, thus an elder brother of Louis XIV ; twin brother of Louis XIV ; Count Mattioli, an Italian convicted of treachery ; a valet, named Dauger, an illegitimate son of Oliver Cromwell. There is little evidence to support any of these theories, and the mystery will probably remain unsolved. The Iron Mask, it should be noted, was really black velvet.

"Well, my lovely friend," said the king to me one day, "we shall soon have a new princess among us. I will engage that she expects to carry all before her at Versailles. I doubt not but she will do as she pleases with her husband, but with me it will be a very different affair."

"May my lucky planet defeat any schemes she may form of supplanting me in Your Majesty's favour."

"Oh! be under no fears on that head," replied the king; "she would only have her trouble for her pains were she to attempt such a thing; for, believe me, you are as necessary to my happiness as the minister Kaunitz can be to Marie Thérèse."

"Sire," cried I, "you bring back joy and consolation to my heart, for I feared that this new princess might appear worthy to engross all your affection."

The approaching arrival of the dauphiness at Versailles absorbed universal attention, and the courtiers eagerly awaited their first view of her, in order to decide upon the degree of influence she would exercise over the mind of the king, that they might regulate their own measures for ingratiating themselves into her favour accordingly. It was perfectly well known that she had been well tutored by her mother which persons or families to be upon good terms with, and which to treat with coolness; and great was the anxiety that existed to have a glance at the notes relative to them, with which her secret tablets were filled. You can scarcely conceive the agitation which pervaded the courtiers, both male and female, during this uncertain state of things; some flattering themselves with the hopes of making a favourable impression upon the young princess, and others dreading the effect of impressions already received by her fatal to their wishes.

The evening that the dauphiness arrived the king said to me, "Look as handsome as you can to-morrow. I wish to prove to my granddaughter that I am a man of

taste. You shall sup with us at Maette." The next day, after having made myself as handsome as possible, I went to the Château. My unexpected arrival, the affability with which the king, taking me by the hand, presented me to his granddaughter, the extreme grace with which she received me, the favourable words which she addressed to me, and which neither her smile nor her looks belied; in a word, my triumph, drove my enemies to despair. The king, who watched me with the greatest anxiety, could not forbear asking the dauphiness what she thought of me; "Madame," replied the princess, "seems to me a very seducing lady, and I cannot be astonished at any attachment that she may inspire." This flattering remark was told me instantly, and greatly delighted me.

The princess was between fifteen and sixteen years of age. She appeared to me less beautiful and fair than pleasant and lady-like. Her hair was of a reddish auburn, but her skin was of a dazzling whiteness. She had a beautiful forehead, a delicious set of teeth, a well-formed nose, eyes full of vivacity and expression; her air was majestic and dignified. She walked well; her figure was well shaped, and her gestures were more free and unstudied than those of the princesses of the blood royal of France.

From the instant of the arrival of the dauphiness, the Duchesse de Grammont, most unwisely flattering herself that so mere a child would easily be led to support her in all her haughty measures, increased her impertinence towards me till I could no longer bear it. I complained to the king of her conduct, and besought him to silence this insolent woman. Louis had a personal dislike to the duchess; but as the dauphiness had exhibited some show of regard for this lady, he felt reluctant to annoy his granddaughter by exiling a person for whom she entertained a partiality.

I was one day going to pay my court to the dauphin, when Madame de Grammont, either by design or accident, managed to obstruct my way; and, rudely endeavouring to pass me, set her foot upon the train of my dress, and tore it to atoms; after which she proceeded, laughing most immoderately. The king, who happened to be following me, was witness of the outrage. He made me a sign to be silent, and I easily read in the angry frown which darkened his countenance that this insult would not long remain unpunished. I returned to my house agitated, and weeping with rage.

As quickly as Louis could take leave of his granddaughter he hastened to rejoin me. Directly he saw me, he exclaimed, "Ask me nothing, tell me nothing; I promise you that your cause is mine also, and in my own person I will avenge it. To-morrow the Duchesse de Grammont shall be publicly expelled the court."

It was in vain I supplicated in her favour; the king was inflexible. Then, returning to his palace, the king sent the Duc d'Ayen to the Duchesse de Grammont, with orders to acquaint her that the king granted the audience she requested, and begged she would not fail to keep the appointed time. Great was the surprise of the lady at receiving this message. She could not restrain herself from saying to him that she had requested no audience of the king; for having the facility of seeing him daily as much as she desired, she had no need to solicit a private interview. "Doubtless, madame," said the duke, "the king's message has reference to some affair of gallantry. You know how deeply he venerates wit and beauty."

The Duchess, seeing no means of turning aside the threatened blow, determined to meet it courageously. She was a woman of energetic mind, clear, clever head, and possibly had a heart disposed for friendship. She presented herself before the king with much embarrass-

ment in her manner. Louis received her with that severe glance which disconcerts, and that cold politeness more chilling than any words, and begged of her to be seated.

"Sire," she said, "Your Majesty, in addition to your many acts of favour to myself and family, has condescended to bestow upon me the honour of an interview I had not ventured so far to solicit. I have hurried to receive Your Majesty's commands, the least of which will be held sacred by me."

"One thing is certain," replied the king; "and that is, that your submission to my will is merely in appearance; and whatever may be the desires I may form, you trouble yourself very little to gratify them. I am under the necessity of expressing my dissatisfaction."

"Dissatisfaction with me, sire?"

"Yes, with you, madam; and what is there in those words can excite your surprise? It is now nearly two years that you have taken pleasure in rendering yourself disagreeable, and have eagerly sought every opportunity of annoying me. I have to charge you with a long tissue of unkind actions towards a person most dear to me. You may not love her, that I cannot insist upon; but you should respect her for the affection I bear her."

"Ah, sire," cried the Duchess, "that would indeed be more than I could endure."

The king went on. "I choose to be master in my own house; and when those about me refuse to conform to my wishes they must quit it."

"Your Majesty dismisses me, then."

"Dismisses or exiles you, whichever you please. Your absurd behaviour drives me to extremities; and the last act of determined malice fills up the measure of your offences."

"Ah, sire, do not punish me for hating her who has so fatally succeeded in effecting my ruin."

" Pardon me ; you are free to hate as you please, but your rude and gross insults I cannot allow. Thus I punish, not your hatred, but your unpolite and unworthy conduct. I therefore command your absence from court, and recommend you to travel in any country but this until you receive fresh orders."

" What, sire ! do you persist in your rigour ? "

" Yes, madame, as obstinately as you have done in your system of opposition. You have constantly insulted me for two years ; and I therefore banish you from court for a similar period : wait until the *third* year of your exile ere you accuse me of severity." So saying, Louis bestowed the usual salute which announced the termination of the conference. Madame de Grammont, quite overcome, was going to throw herself at the feet of the king, but he prevented her, and taking her by the hand, conducted her to the door, where he honoured her by a profound inclination of the head.

When the king next visited me, and we were alone, he said to me, " Behold the proof that you are avenged. The Duchess quits Paris and only returns under every assurance of good behaviour."

CHAPTER V

SCANDAL AND INTRIGUE

EAGERLY as I longed to hear the explanations of the Duc de Choiseul, I felt but little inclination to enter upon terms of friendship with him. But he anxiously solicited an interview, through the medium of Madame de l'Hôpital, and I yielded. She had requested, in pursuance of her directions, that the conversation between us should take place either amidst the groves of Versailles or in the labyrinth of Marly; the self-love of M. de Choiseul induced him to desire that this interview should be so contrived, as to wear the air of a mere chance rencontre. To this I would not consent; saying, that it did not suit my pleasure to quit the house; and that when a gentleman solicited the favour of speaking to a lady, it became his business to wait upon her, without expecting she should come in search of him.

On the following day he presented himself before me tastefully and magnificently dressed, both look and voice wearing the stamp of high-born pride and haughtiness. Nevertheless, amidst all this pomp, it was evident that he did not entirely feel the ease he assumed, and that a species of remorse rankled at his heart, in spite of the courtier-like gallantry with which he had invested himself.

"Madame," said he, bowing twice most profoundly, "the moment has arrived which I have long most ardently desired."

"The fault has not been mine, my lord," said I, "that it has been delayed until now. My door has never been shut against any visit you might have honoured me with."

"Then, madame, I may flatter myself that I should have been kindly received?"

"Yes, sir, you would ever have been welcome, but not those belonging to you, for I will be perfectly candid; always excepting the Duchesse de Choiseul, for whom I entertain the greatest veneration and respect."

"She is indeed well worthy the exalted opinion you express of her; and had I followed her advice, I should not have been found amongst the ranks of your enemies."

"You confess the fact then, monsieur le duc?" said I.

"Madame, when I solicited the favour of this conversation it was with the sincerest desire of adjusting all differences between us."

"Pray begin, my lord, I am all attention."

"Well, madame, I deeply regret all that has passed, and deplore that my friends and part of my family should be disagreeable to you; I take upon myself to engage that their hostility shall end, and am willing to afford you the most perfect satisfaction upon this point."

"I am well assured of it, my lord duke; and likewise that you have never taken any part in the calumnies which have been aimed at me. Let us then forgive the past; and since we are agreed as to the future, let us speak but of the present. I have friends fitted to serve the king, whose ambition leads them to aspire to that honour. What will you do to assist them?"

"Ere I promise that, madame, it is necessary I should be acquainted with them."

"What would it avail to name them to you? You perfectly well comprehend to whom I allude. I am resolutely decided to support them, and to employ for this purpose the friendship with which his majesty deigns to honour me."

The duke coloured deeply at these words.

"Then, madame," said he, "you would fain strip me to enrich others?"

"No, my lord, I ask but a division of your possessions. You cannot have everything; and it would not be fair that our reconciliation should be profitable to you only."

"Madame, I have never, since my entry into the ministry, sought to live at the expense of my country; and let me resign my office when I may, I shall retire loaded only with debts, whilst you and your friends draw large revenues from the nation."

The conversation became warm and angry; the duke and myself, with crimson cheeks and inflamed countenances, surveyed each other with haughty defiance. At length he added:

"I had hoped that I should have quitted you more kindly disposed towards me."

"And I, my lord, fancied that you were coming with an ardent desire for peace; but no, the spirit of your sister leads you astray, and you would fain punish me for her absence from Court."

"Madame, I beseech you leave my sister in peace. She has gone; that ought to satisfy you. We will not, if you please, speak of her."

"I only wish that she would likewise do me the honour to be silent respecting me. One might suppose that the sole object of her journeyings was but to excite all France against me."

The duke merely warded off this last assertion, and we separated greater enemies than ever.

The first person to whom I could communicate what had passed was the Duc d'Aiguillon. He listened to my recital without any decided expression of his opinion; but no sooner had I concluded than he took me by the hand, and pressing it with a friendly grasp:

"How I congratulate you," said he, "upon the good

fortune which has extricated you from this affair. Do you know that a reconciliation with the Duc de Choiseul would have involved your inevitable disgrace? The Choiseuls would have entangled you in their nets, and, separated from your real friends, would have made you the innocent author of your own destruction. Tell the king that the Duc de Choiseul has been to see you, that you conversed together some time, and that he has offended you more than ever."

"I promise you, my kind friend," said I, "to follow your advice."

When I next saw the king, I apprized him of the visit.

"That does not astonish me," said Louis, "the duke is anxious to be on friendly terms with you."

"He has, then, taken a very contrary road to arrive at my friendship," said I; "if he really desires that we should be on good terms, he must conduct himself very differently;" and there the conversation ended. But several days afterwards, having sent away my maître d'hôtel, with whom I had reason to be dissatisfied, and the king appearing surprised at seeing a fresh countenance amongst my household, I said to him, "Sire, I have got rid of *my* Choiseul, when will it please you to get rid of yours?" The king, without replying to me, began to laugh; in which, for want of a better termination to my remark, I was constrained to join.

Amongst my household favourites at this time was Zamor, a young African boy, full of intelligence and mischief; simple in his nature, yet wild as his country. Zamor fancied himself the equal of all he met, scarcely deigning to acknowledge the king himself as his superior. This son of Africa was presented to me by the Duc de Richelieu, clad in the picturesque costume of his native land; his head ornamented with feathers of every colour, a short petticoat of plaited grass around his waist, while



(*A. G. Photo*).

A DINNER PARTY AT MADAME DU BARRI'S CHÂTEAU AT LUCIENNES

From a painting by Moreau in the Louvre.

the richest bracelets adorned his wrists, and chains of gold, pearls, and rubies glittered over his neck and hung from his ears. Never would anyone have suspected the old Maréchal, whose parsimony was almost proverbial, of making such a magnificent present.

I became passionately fond of my little page, nor was the young urchin slow in perceiving the ascendancy he had gained over me, and, in the end, he abused his influence, and attained an almost incredible degree of insolence and effrontery. Still, I pardoned all his folly, and amused myself from morning to night with watching his nimble fingers perform a thousand tricks of jugglery.

Zamor was on good terms with all my friends, and did not disdain the society of the king, who, by way of amusement, bestowed on my little negro the title of Governor of the Pavillon de Luciennes, with a revenue arising therefrom of a thousand crowns, and the chancellor caused the necessary papers to be prepared and delivered to him sealed with the State seal.

At the moment of my writing this, Zamor still resides under my roof. During the years he has passed with me he has gained in height, but in none of the intellectual qualities does he seem to have made any progress; age has only stripped him of the charms of infancy without supplying others in their place; nor can I venture to affirm that his gratitude and devotion to me are such as I have reason to expect they should be[1]; for I can with truth affirm that I have never ceased to lavish kindness on him, and to be, in every sense of the word, a good mistress to him.

I may gratefully assert I have possessed many true and sincere friends, who have ever faithfully adhered to my fortunes. One in particular I shall mention here, Prince

[1] This wretch, whom the Comtesse du Barri loaded with her favours and benefits, was eventually responsible for bringing her to the scaffold.

Charles Auguste Christian. This prince, who chanced to visit France during the zenith of my Court favour, was very desirous of seeing me, and both he and his brother were presented to me by the Comte de la Marche, their friend, and they quickly requested the honour of my friendship. Auguste Christian pleased me most by his gentle and amiable manners, although most persons gave the preference to his brother, Maximilian Joseph, better known by the name of Prince Max. Auguste Christian, in the fervour of his attachment, speaking openly to me of the delicacy of my situation, proposed to me, in case of any reverse, that I should seek an asylum in his dominions; and I must do him the justice to say, that at the death of the king, far from forgetting his proffer, he lost no time in reminding me of it.

Prince Max was extremely well looked upon at Court both by the king and the princesses. As for the dauphiness, prejudiced against him as she was by her mother, she naturally regarded him with an eye of cool mistrust, and manifested her open dislike by never inviting him to any of her parties. Prince Max spoke of this pointed neglect to the king, who immediately summoned the dauphin. "My son," said he to him, "I see with regret that Prince Max is never an invited guest at any of your balls and fêtes. Remember, he belongs to a family which has been our most ancient ally, and do not take up the quarrels of a house which, until your marriage, has ever been opposed in deadly hatred to us."

If the dauphin was not gifted with a very extensive capacity, he was possessed of sufficient plain sense to comprehend, and to enter into the views of his grandfather, to whom he pledged his word that henceforward Prince Max should be treated with more respect; and he kept his word, for the instant he returned to his apartments, he commanded the Duc de la Vauguyon to

add the name of Prince Max to the list of invited persons. He was, therefore, from that period invited to the house of Marie Antoinette, who indemnified herself for this compulsory civility by refusing to bestow upon him one single smile or gracious word. It must indeed be agreed that the dauphiness had brought with her into France too many Austrian notions; but now, at the moment of my writing this, she is much changed, and is as true a Frenchwoman as though she had been born and bred in Paris.

Prince Auguste Christian entertained for me a sincere regard, which I returned with the truest friendship. My feelings were as pure and simple as his own, spite of the odious calumnies with which my enemies have attacked this harmless acquaintance; but their slander in this matter was no worse than the manner in which they spoke of every person who visited me. According to their report, I was the mistress of all who presented themselves.

I will now return to the recital of those events which hastened the fall of the Duc de Choiseul.

My friendship for the Duc d'Aiguillon had long made me use my influence for his reinstatement in the king's favour. One day I received a letter from M. de Maupeou, asking me to receive him and the duke in private audience. On the following day both the duke and the chancellor were faithful to their appointment, and after the usual salutations, which I made as brief as possible, I abruptly demanded of M. de Maupeou his reason for desiring us to meet. "Do not imagine, madam," said he, "that it has reference to any matter of moment; it merely concerns three mere trifles: *primo*, to dismiss the present minister, the Duc de Choiseul; *secundo*, to procure the Duc d'Aiguillon to be his successor; and, *tertio*, to overthrow every parliament in the kingdom."

The avowal of these three purposes drew from me an involuntary cry, and the duke replied, in a gloomy tone:

" It would be more than equal to the labours of a dozen Hercules."

" It shall be accomplished by me alone," said the chancellor. " I who am no Hercules will accomplish it, provided you, madam, will do me the favour to submit the memorial you see before you to the king, and to support it with your utmost influence."

Thus saying, he put into my hands a large roll of paper tied round with a black riband. I pointed this last circumstance out to the chancellor with a sort of superstitious dread.

" It has happened entirely by chance," replied he, " and is merely prophetical of the downfall of your enemies."

" Well, my good cousin," said I, " what is to be the preliminary step in this momentous business ? "

" This, madam : that we shall mutually explain our motives and views in entering upon the affair ; for, after all, self-interest will be the fundamental principle of our alliance. How far would it suit the duke's ideas to enter into a strict alliance with me that should endure, even in the prospect of his being called to the ministry ? for I will not conceal from you, that my interest is materially concerned in such a measure."

" I am willing to accept whatever proposition you may make me to that effect," said the duke.

" Let us then engage, by a reciprocal promise, mutually to support each other so long as we shall remain at the head of affairs, and to quit them together in such a way, that the disgrace of one shall be the signal of retreat to the other ; excepting always, what is very unlikely to be the case, that either of us should voluntarily desire to resign the administration," and, placing himself immediately at my writing-table, he drew up an engagement, which the Duc d'Aiguillon copied, merely changing the names.

These agreements having been dated, signed, and enclosed in an envelope, sealed with the arms of the duke and M. de Maupeou, the latter placed them in my hands, requesting I would take charge of them until M. d'Aiguillon should be appointed by the king to the ministry, then I was to deliver to each the written engagement of his colleague.

"The Duc de Choiseul," said the chancellor, "is our greatest and, apparently, most difficult enemy to overcome; nevertheless, the task may be less impossible than it appears upon a first view. The king no longer cherishes any regard for him, but retains him in his office from the impression that he is useful as well as devoted to the interests of monarchy. These ideas it must be our task to efface from the mind of his majesty. The Duchesse de Grammont may, unknown to herself, be brought to aid our schemes against her brother; for that purpose we must effect her recall to Court. Every unguarded word which escapes her must be carefully collected and brought to the king: then we will strike our last blows; I, in the course of my ministerial capacity with the king, and you, madam, during the familiarity of your conversations with his majesty. There is nothing our monarch would not listen to from your lips. Avail yourself of this to promote our common interest, and, above all, when the Duchesse de Grammont shall be returned, to effect which you must immediately exert all your energies, you must more particularly show yourself alarmed by these fresh intrigues. Well, my lord duke, what think you of all this?"

"That you are a wonderfully clever man," replied the Duc d'Aiguillon. "We may reckon much upon the extravagances Madame de Grammont will inevitably commit."

"We shall require the assistance of our lovely countess," concluded M. de Maupeou; and following up his speech

by immediate action, the chancellor proceeded to trace out for me a plan of conduct replete with the greatest skill and talent.

M. de Maupeou possessed a peculiar genius for all that is usually designated intrigue. No ordinary man would have ventured to attempt the ruin of the whole ministry, and to accomplish so daring a work a more than common capacity, as well as a superior courage and audacity, were requisite.

In addition to the written bond subsisting between them, M. d'Aiguillon and the chancellor bound themselves by the most solemn assurances of mutual fidelity; and, I must say, from that moment up to the accomplishment of their enterprise, they acted with the most remarkable sincerity. Our league was shortly after strengthened by the addition of two powerful auxiliaries, the Abbé Terray and the Duc de la Vrillière.

The Abbé Terray had powerful reason for joining us in the hatred he bore to the Duc de Choiseul, spite of his having entered into the ministry with him. His fear induced him to unite his forces to those of the Duc d'Aiguillon and M. de Maupeou, although, in his heart, he felt no regard for either one or the other. The Duc de la Vrillière had the same deeply-rooted aversion to the Duc de Choiseul; and, like the Abbé Terray, joined our party principally with the view of gratifying his revengeful schemes. The Choiseuls held the Abbé in the most sovereign contempt, and continually played off some trick at his expense, to the great amusement of the whole Court. After us, too, came the Duc de Richelieu, the Duc de la Vauguyon, and the Comte de Broglie. The latter was a man of great character, who had been exiled at the instance of Choiseul, but was now returned and in charge of the secret police.

Thus the Chancellor Maupeou, the Ducs d'Aiguillon,

de Richelieu, de la Vrillière, and de la Vauguyon, the Abbé Terray, the Comtes de Maillebois and de Broglie, were the allies with whose assistance I was about to bring down the already tottering power of the de Choiseuls.

The first, and, perhaps, most mortal blow was dealt by me, when I requested the king to recall Madame de Grammont.

"In the name of heaven," exclaimed the king, "what can occasion the singular interest you seem to take in this woman?"

"I have no further reason for it, sire," replied I, "than that I prefer her being at Versailles rather than in the provinces: she is traversing the kingdom solely with a view of making fresh enemies for me; and she has done me much more harm during her exile than whilst she was dwelling at Versailles or Paris."

"Still," resumed Louis, "it may be easy to send her to some spot where her accursed tongue may no longer exercise itself at your expense."

"No, sire," exclaimed I, "I conjure you to recall her; she will be a continual annoyance to me so long as she is at a distance. I would rather face my enemy than allow her to go on spreading her mischief far and near."

"Well," rejoined the king, "all I can say is that Madame de Pompadour, in your place, would have adopted a very different line of conduct."

"Ah! but then you know I am better than she was; at least, more forgiving—am I not?"

"Indeed," replied Louis, "you are; and you well deserve to be rewarded for such genuine goodness of heart; so be content. The duchess shall be recalled; and I am glad of it for her brother's sake. But remember one thing, the return of the duchess will be a glorious triumph to the party of the Choiseuls; all the worse for you, my sweet countess, if hereafter you should have

reason to repent your kindness, whose fault will it have been? Not mine, certainly; but your very own, my dear, charitable friend."

Saying this, the king made me a profound bow of mock respect. I threw my arms about his neck, and embraced him; for I well knew that nothing was more welcome and gratifying to him than these unexpected marks of my attachment. He quitted me, all impatience to put an end to the frigid ceremony which had been established between him and his minister since the departure of the Duchesse de Grammont. He reached his own apartments, and instantly despatched a messenger, to desire the Duc de Choiseul to come to him without delay. The moment the minister entered, "My lord," cried Louis, "I authorize you to inform your sister that I permit her to return to Versailles. I wish you to let her know that she is indebted for her recall to the generous solicitations of the Comtesse du Barri; for, as far as my feelings were concerned, I can only say, I was very far from thinking of terminating her exile."

I am persuaded that the duke would have preferred that his sister should not have been pardoned, rather than to owe it to my prayers. However, he loaded the king with thanks and acknowledgments, mingled with the handsomest mention of myself.

Meanwhile, the famous memorial of M. de Maupeou had been delivered into the hands of the king. One evening, when his majesty came to pay me his accustomed visit, he appeared sad and dejected, nor could all my gaiety relax his features from their gloomy expression: at last, losing all patience, I exclaimed:

"Plague take the hateful causes of your majesty's bad spirits."

"I shall never know peace," said Louis, "so long as these accursed long robes preserve the power that the

weakness or credulity of my predecessors invested them with. Do you know anything of a memorial the chancellor left for me?"

"'Tis here, sire," said I, drawing it from a porcelain vase. "M. de Maupeou gave it me yesterday (I had, in fact, been its guardian for the last fortnight); and, as he told me it contained very important facts, I have been attentively perusing it this morning."

"And what do you think of it?"

"Me, sire? I do not presume to understand affairs of State importance. All I can say is, that if the parliaments appeared to me so dangerous, they should not remain four-and-twenty hours in my service."

"Go on, go on," exclaimed the king, traversing the chamber with hurried steps, "do as others have done; force me to take some imprudent step, which shall draw down upon my head the hatred of all France."

"Sire," cried I, "you mistake; you are the object of universal love; everything proves it; but, unfortunately, you have not made yourself sufficiently an object of dread; and your forbearance and unwearied clemency have given rise to the mistaken idea that you may be disobeyed with impunity. Were you but to burst like the thunderbolt on the parliament of Paris, the cowardly members of it would be thankful by any concessions to remove your just resentment: your glorious ancestor, Louis XIV, governed them with a whip and a scourge."

"Upon my word," cried the king, rubbing his hands, "I have a great inclination to follow your advice: I do not see what I can do better."

Just at this critical moment fortune brought both the chancellor and the Duc d'Aiguillon to my apartments.

"Gentlemen," said the king, in answer to their profound salutation, "I have been conferring with my excellent friend here, and she has proposed to me some

very decided measures; nothing less than to wage open war with the parliaments of Paris."

"Deign, sire," added M. de Maupeou, "to preserve these praiseworthy intentions. The malice of the parliaments, unless put a stop to by your majesty, is greatly to be feared."

"Well, then," said the king, "if it must be so, summon a general assembly at Versailles for the day after to-morrow."

"And why, may it please your majesty, should it be at Versailles?" inquired the chancellor. "It is, on the one hand, displaying a species of weakness to summon the magistracy to meet you here, while, on the other, it is affording the people a fair opportunity of exclaiming against this violation of their usual forms. Do better than this—leave this place without apprising any person, and appear at Paris whilst you are wholly unexpected; your unlooked-for presence will strike terror into every heart."

This advice met with my entire approbation, as well as that of the Duc d'Aiguillon. It appeared the only method of avoiding the united resistance of the opposite party, of preventing Paris from being inundated with pamphlets in prose and verse, and of encouraging the timid or emboldening the courageous. The king likewise approved this counsel; and it was therefore agreed that it should be kept secret till the next day only, and that at the breaking up of the council the members should be apprised of it.

The following day was Saturday. When the council had terminated, the king, who had quitted the room hastily, returned: "Gentlemen," said he, "I was about to leave you, forgetting that I had not announced to you my intentions for the morrow. The parliament has exhausted my patience. Early to-morrow I shall present

myself in my own person at the palace, and, I flatter myself, I shall bring the parliament to a proper sense of its duty."

At this intimation the Duc de Choiseul became pale as death; he saw in his exclusion from the privy council in which these measures had been resolved, the rapid diminution of his credit; whilst, at the same time, he feared that if the king thought fit to take him with him to Paris, it would embroil him with the magistracy. Nevertheless, advancing towards the king, and repressing his profound emotion, he said:

"Is my presence necessary to your majesty?"

"No, my lord duke," replied the king; "this is an affair which comes only within the jurisdiction of my chancellor."

"In that case, sire, as I had proposed going to-morrow to la Ferté, to pass some days there with M. Delaborde, if you will deign to permit me, I will accomplish this journey."

"Take your pleasure in whatever way seems best to you, my lord," replied the king; "and I wish you all possible enjoyment." Saying which, Louis XV bowed to M. de Choiseul, and quitted the room.

The king having returned to my apartments, sent to desire the attendance of the captain of the guards then upon duty, and issued the necessary orders for his regiment being in readiness to march on the following day. Companies were placed along the road and in the squares of Paris, in order that, in case of any disturbance, they might be ready to quell the least appearance of a tumult. When we were alone, the king said to me:

"To-morrow will see me, not merely the nominal, but the real master of France; hitherto I have shared my crown with my parliament, but it is time I should vindicate my reign alone."

Monday, September 3, 1770, at length arrived. At the break of day the various detachments of the king's guards took possession of the posts assigned to them; and their martial and imposing appearance was sufficient to inform every malcontent that they had the power, as well as will, to repress all demonstrations of dissatisfaction.

Every member of parliament, summoned at an early hour of the morning to attend an assembly extraordinary of the states-general, repaired with punctuality to the palace; a great number of peers likewise attended, and never had a more solemn assembly been collected to discuss the affairs of a nation. After the prescribed ceremony Louis XV, having made the usual salutation to his parliament, contented himself with pronouncing these laconic words:

"Gentlemen, my chancellor will explain to you my intentions." Upon which M. de Maupeou read aloud a long paper in which the king recapitulated his complaints against the parliament, more especially their neglect of his command to withdraw certain actions against the Duc d'Aiguillon. In the strongest terms he then prohibited them from meeting again to discuss such matters, and concluded:

"His majesty further enjoins his first president, or any other president or officer who shall preside in his absence, to dissolve every meeting in which any proposition may be made tending to discuss matters respecting which the most perfect silence is commanded, as well as touching any ambassador who may be sent you from the other parliaments."

The chancellor here terminated this vigorous protestation, from which we all anticipated the happiest results. In the beds of justice none but the sovereign, or his delegates, had the power of speaking; the parliament therefore listened in profound silence, however it

might be internally resolving not to obey the king's pleasure.

Those who had dreaded the fury of the populace were not mistaken. Scarcely were the particulars of this meeting known, than the Court, the city, the whole of France, became in a state of violent excitement, of which an adequate idea can scarcely be formed. A universal clamour arose against the Duc d'Aiguillon, the chancellor, and even the king, and, as you may readily suppose, I was not spared in the business. I received from different parts of the kingdom more than two hundred anonymous letters, in which I was threatened with every disgrace, as well as humiliating punishment.

The conduct of the Duc de Choiseul was universally admired and eulogized, and his not having accompanied the king to the bed of justice was praised to the skies, as proving how nobly this nobleman had protested against that disastrous measure: he was everywhere styled the friend and supporter of the laws of the land and the defender and champion of parliaments.

In my despair at thus seeing the chances turn so entirely in the favour of this minister, I vowed his ruin, and I busied myself in the fulfilment of my oath with a bitter and revengeful feeling, of which I could not have believed myself capable; I was still further excited thereto by the return of the Duchesse de Grammont, who was received in triumph at Court, where every one crowded around her to offer the most joyful welcome, and to assure her she had not been forgotten during her absence; however, her vain boasting, and the parade she made of her haughtiness and hatred to me, contributed not a little to the success of my projects, the particulars of which I shall hereafter relate.

It was about the commencement of this year that the Choiseuls, who had formerly inveighed so bitterly against

the disgraceful situation of being mistress to the king, made a powerful effort to supplant me in the affections of Louis XV. The Comte de Choiseul, son to the marquis, had espoused a young and beautiful Creole, Mademoiselle de Rubi, whose all-surpassing loveliness was expected to eclipse the whole Court; she was rumoured to be the most perfect beauty that had ever appeared, and her relations built the greatest hopes upon the sensation she would produce. I own that I had many serious alarms on the subject myself. One day the Maréchale de Mirepoix said to me, with her accustomed good-humour:

"Well, my fair countess, so you have a rival in training, the modest and virtuous Choiseuls are dying with envy to step into your shoes. Have a care of them, they are a deep set. I am sadly afraid, not of their succeeding in their plot, but of their filling your mind with alarm."

I replied, with some haughtiness, that I had no fears for myself; but this assertion did not indeed prove the fact, for I found it impossible to rest till I had informed the king of it, who, shrugging up his shoulders, replied: "I know all their schemes, and the hopes formed upon them; but fear not, you run no danger whilst I see Madame de Grammont behind the curtain. Were I to accept a mistress from her hand, she would wish to govern all France; and her insatiable ambition would convert the temple of love into an office for intrigue."

The king kept his word with me; the haughty beauty was brought to Versailles to exhibit her graces and sylph-like form. Louis XV saluted her with politeness, addressed to her many courteous expressions, but never once looked at her, or seemed aware of her bewitching presence. The eyes of more than two hundred persons were intently watching the effect she would produce on

the king, but he appeared wholly preoccupied and inattentive to all that was going on. The conduct of the king upon this occasion perfectly delighted me, by proving how entirely I was the sovereign mistress of his heart.

CHAPTER VI

THE PARC-AUX-CERFS

I was now firmly fixed at Court, the king, more than ever devoted to me, seemed unable to dispense with my constant presence. I had so successfully studied his habits and peculiarities, that my empire over him was established on a basis too firm to be shaken, whilst my power and unbounded influence convinced my enemies that, so long as the present monarch sat upon the throne of France, their attempts at diminishing my credit and influence would only recoil upon themselves. Louis XV generally supped in my apartments every evening, unless indeed, by way of change, I went to sup with him. Our guests were, of course, of the first order, but yet not of the most exemplary morals. These persons had tact, and saw that, to please the king, they must surpass him ; so that, if by chance he should reflect on himself, he would appear to advantage amongst them. Poor courtiers ! It was labour in vain. The king was in too much fear of knowing himself to undertake that study : he knew the penetration and severity of his own judgment, and on no account would he exercise it at his own expense.

The Prince de Terigny, Comte d'Escars, the Duc de Fleury, were not the least amusing. They kept up a lively strain of conversation, and the king laughed outrageously. But the vilest of the party was the Duc de Fronsac. Ye gods ! what a wretch ! To speak ill of him is no sin. A mangled likeness of his father, he had all his faults with not one of his merits. He was perpetually changing his mistresses, but it cannot be said whether it

was inconstancy on his part, or disgust on theirs, though the latter appears to me most probable.

The saints of Versailles—the Duc de la Vauguyon, the Duc d'Estissac, and M. de Durfort, did like others. These persons practised religion in the face of the world, and abstained from loose conversation in presence of their own families; but with the king they laid aside their religion and reserve, so that these hypocrites had in the city all the honours of devotion, and in the royal apartments all the advantages of loose conduct. As for me, I was at Versailles the same as everywhere else. To please the king I had only to be myself. What charmed him in the evening, would delight again the next day. He had an equilibrium of pleasure, a balance of amusement which can hardly be described; it was every day the same variety: the same journeys, the same fêtes, the balls, the theatres, all came round at fixed periods, with most monotonous regularity. In fact, people knew exactly when to laugh and when to look grave.

There was in the Château a most singular character, the Grand Master of the Ceremonies of France. His great-grandfather, his grandfather, his father, who had fulfilled these functions for a century, had transmitted to him their understanding and their duties. All he thought of was how to regulate the motions and steps of every person at Court. He was always preaching to me, and quoted against me the precedents of Diane de Poitiers, or Gabrielle d'Estrées. One day, he told me that all the misfortunes of Mademoiselle de la Vallière occurred in consequence of her neglect of etiquette. He would have had all matters pass at Court during the old age of Louis XV as at the period of the childhood of Louis XIV, and would fain have had the administration of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, that he might have arranged all with due ceremonies.

Since this word Parc-aux-Cerfs has escaped my pen, I will tell something of it. I can tell better than any other person what it really was, for I, like the Marquise de Pompadour, took upon myself the superintendence of it, and busied myself with what they did there. It was, *entre nous*, the black spot in the reign of Louis XV, and will cost me much pain to describe.

The vices of Louis were the result of bad education. When an infant, they gave him for governor the vainest, most coxcomical, stupidest of men—the Duc de Villeroi. Never had courtier so much courtiership as he. He saw the young prince from morning till night, and from morning till night he was incessantly repeating in his ears that his future subjects were born for him, and that they were all dependent on his good and gracious pleasure. When grown up, Louis XV saw the libertinism of Cardinal Dubois and the orgies of the regency. Madame de Mailli's shameless conduct was before his eyes, and Richelieu's also. Louis XV could not conduct himself differently from his ministers and his family. His timid character was formed upon the example of others. At first he selected his own mistresses, but afterwards he chose someone who took that trouble off his hands. Lebel became purveyor-in-chief to his pleasures, and controlled in Versailles the house known as the Parc-aux-Cerfs.

As soon as the courtiers knew of the existence and purposes of this house, they intrigued for the control of it. The king laughed at all their efforts, and left the whole management to Lebel, under the superintendence of the Comte de Saint-Florentin, minister of the royal household. They installed there, however, a sort of military chief, formerly a major of infantry, who was called, jestingly, M. de Cervières; his functions consisted in an active surveillance, and in preventing young men from penetrating the seraglio. The soldiers at the nearest

station had orders to obey his first summons. His pay was twelve thousand livres a year.

A woman styled the *surintendante* had the management of the domestic affairs. She ruled with despotic sway; controlled the expenses; preserved good order; and regulated the amusements of her charges, taking care that they did not mix one with the other. She was an elderly canoness of a noble order, belonging to one of the best families in Burgundy. She was only known at the Parc as *Madame*, and no one ventured to give her any other name. Shortly after the decease of Madame de Pompadour she had succeeded in this employ a woman of low rank, who had a most astonishing mind. Louis XV thought very highly of her, and said that if she were a man he would have made her his minister. She had put the harem on an admirable system, and instructed the odalisques in all the necessary etiquette.

The Madame of my time was a woman of noble appearance, tall, ascetic, with a keen eye and imperious manner. She expressed a sovereign contempt of all the low-born beauties confided to her trust. However, she did not treat her wards ill, for some one of them might produce a passion in the heart of the king, and she was determined to be prepared for whatever might fall out. As to the noble ladies, they were her favourites. Madame did not divide her flock into fair and dark, which would have been natural, but into noble and ignoble.

Besides Madame, there were two under-mistresses, whose duties consisted in keeping the young ladies company who were placed there. They sometimes dined with new-comers, instructed them in polite behaviour, and aided them in their musical lessons, or in dancing, history, and literature, in which these *élèves* were instructed. Then followed a dozen women of lower station, creatures for any service, half waiting-women, half companions, who

kept watch over the young ladies, and neglected nothing that could injure each other at every opportunity. The work of the house was performed by proper servants, and male domestics, chosen expressly for their age and ugliness. They were paid highly, but in return for the least indiscretion on their part, they were sent to linger out their existence in a State prison. A severe watch was kept over every person of either sex in this mysterious establishment. It was requisite, in fact, that an impenetrable veil should be cast over the frailties of the king; and that the public should know nothing of what occurred at the Parc-aux-Cerfs.

The general term *élèves* was applied to the young persons who were kept here. They were of all ages, from nine to eighteen years. Until fifteen they were kept in total ignorance of the city which they inhabited. When they had attained that age, no more mystery was made of it; they only endeavoured to prevent them from believing that they were destined for the king's service. Sometimes they were told that they were imprisoned as well as their family: sometimes, a lover rich and powerful kept them concealed to satisfy his love. One thought she belonged to a German prince, another to an English lord. There were some, however, who, better informed, either by their predecessors or by chance, knew precisely what was in store for them, and accordingly built some exceedingly fine castles in the air. But when they were suspected to be so knowing, they were sent away, and either married or compelled to enter a cloister or chapter.

The noble damsels were served with peculiar etiquette; their servants wore a green livery. Those who belonged to the ignobles had their valets clothed only in grey. The king had arranged this, and applauded it as one of the most admirable decisions of his life, and contended with me that the families who paid this impost for his pleasures

were greatly indebted to him for it. I assure you, my friend, that there are often very peculiar ideas in the head of a king.

After *madame*, the *sous-mésdames*, the young ladies, came a lady who had no title in the house, because she " carried on the war " out of doors, but still was a most useful personage. In very truth Mère Bompart was a wonderful animal. Picture to yourself a woman rather small than large, rather fat than lean, rather old than young, with a good foot, a good eye, as robust as a trooper, with a decided " call " for intrigue, drinking nothing but wine, telling nothing but lies, swearing by, or denying God, as suited her purpose. Fancy such an one, and you will have before you *Mère Bompart, pourvoyeuse en chef des cellules du Parc-aux-Cerfs*.

She was in correspondence with all sorts of persons. She treated Lebel as her equal, went familiarly to M. de Sartines, and occasionally condescended to visit M. de Saint-Florentin. Everybody at Court received her graciously ; everybody but the king and myself, who held her in equal horror.

The Parc-aux-Cerfs cost enormous sums. The lowest expense was calculated at 150,000 livres, to pay only the functionaries and the domestics, the education and board of the *élèves*, etc. This does not include the cost of the *recruiting service*, the indemnities paid to families, the dowry given with them in marriage, the presents made to them, and the expenses of the illegitimate children : this was enormous in cost, at least 2,000,000 livres a year, even at the lowest estimate. The Parc-aux-Cerfs was kept up for thirty-four years : it cost annually 4,000,000 or 5,000,000 livres, and that will amount to nearly 150,000,000 (£6,250,000).

A short time after my sojourn at Versailles, when I was the acknowledged mistress of the king, the Duc de

Richelieu asked me if I had heard of the Parc-aux-Cerfs? I asked him, in my turn, what he meant, and if I could procure any account of the place. He then told me of the care which Madame de Pompadour bestowed on the place, the advantage she drew from it, and assured me of the necessity for following her example. I spoke of this to Comte Jean, and begged his advice. My brother-in-law replied:

"You must do as the Marquise de Pompadour did, and as the Duc de Richelieu has advised. They spend a vast deal of money in this house, and I undertake to look over their accounts. Nominate me your prime minister, and I shall be the happiest of men. It is impossible but there must be something to be gleaned from his majesty."

"In truth, my dear brother-in-law, you would be in your element; money to handle and young girls to manage. What more could you covet? You will establish a gaming-table at the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and never quit it again."

Comte Jean began to laugh, and then seriously advised me to follow the plain counsel of the Duc de Richelieu.

I decided on doing so. I sent for Madame. She came with all the dignity of an abbess of a regally founded convent; but in spite of her pretensions, I only saw in her the rival of Gourdan and Pâris, and treated her as such; that is, with some contempt, for with that feeling her office inspired me. She told me all I have described to you, and many other things which have since escaped me. At that time there were only four *élèves* in the house. When she had given me all the details I wished, I sent her away, desiring to be informed of all that passed in her establishment.

My present situation was not a little embarrassing; known and recognized as the mistress of the king, it but ill accorded with my feelings to be compelled to add to

that title the superintendent of his pleasures; and I had not yet been sufficiently initiated into the intrigues of a Court life to accept this strange charge without manifest dislike and hesitation. Nevertheless, I was compelled to stifle my feelings and resign myself to the bad as well as the good afforded by my present situation; at a future period I shall have occasion again to revert to the Parc-aux-Cerfs during the period of my reign, but for the present I wish to change the subject by relating what befell me at a fête given me by Madame de Valentinois, while she feigned to give it in honour of Madame de Provence.

The Comtesse de Valentinois, flattered by the kindness of the dauphiness's manner towards her, requested that that princess would do her the honour to pass an evening at her house. Hitherto I had not made my appearance at any of the houses of the nobility when the princesses were invited thither; this clearly proved to the public in general how great was the opposition I experienced from the Court party. I was now delighted to prove to the Parisians that I was not always to lead the life of a recluse, but that I could freely present myself at those parties to which other ladies were invited. However, as my friends apprehended that the Comtesse de Provence might prevail upon her lady of honour not to invite me, by the advice of the chancellor and the minister for foreign affairs it was arranged that I should for a week previous to the fête feign a severe indisposition. It would be impossible to describe the joy with which these false tidings were received by my enemies. Every hour my friends brought me in fresh anecdotes of the avidity with which the rumour of my dangerous state had been received, while I lay upon what the credulous hopes of my enemies had determined should be my death-bed, laughing heartily at their folly, and preparing fresh

schemes to confound and disappoint their anticipated triumph.

One very important object of consideration was my dress for the coming occasion. The king presented me with a new set of jewels, and himself selected the materials for my robe and train, which were to be composed of a rich green satin embroidered with gold, trimmed with wreaths of roses, and looped up with pearls; the lower part of this magnificent dress was trimmed with a profusion of the finest Flemish lace. I wore on my head a garland of full-blown roses, composed of the finest green and gold work; round my forehead was a string of beautiful pearls, from the centre of which depended a diamond star; add to this a pair of splendid ear-rings, valued at 100,000 crowns, with a variety of jewels equally costly, and you may form some idea of my appearance on that eventful evening. The king, who presided at my toilette, could not repress his admiration; he even insisted upon clasping my necklace, in order that he might, as he said, flatter himself with having completed such a triumph of nature and art.

At the hour fixed I set out, conducted by the Ducs d'Aiguillon and de Cossé. I have introduced this latter for the first time, however I will promise that it will not be for the last; he possessed, and still possesses all the virtues of his noble house; he was impetuous from a deeply feeling heart, and proud from a consciousness of being properly appreciated. Young, handsome, and daring, he was pre-eminently calculated both to inspire love, and to feel it; it was quite impossible for him to fail in winning the affections of any female he exerted himself to please.

My entrance was a complete *coup de théâtre*. I had been imagined languishing on the bed of sickness, yet there I stood in all the fullness of health and freshness of beauty. I could very easily read upon each countenance

the vexation and rage my appearance excited ; however, I proceeded without any delay to the mistress of the house, whom I found busily engaged in seating her visitors, and playing the amiable to the dauphiness. This princess seemed equally astonished at my unexpected apparition ; nevertheless, taken off her guard, she could not prevent herself from courteously returning the profound salutation I made her. As for the Duchesse de la Vauguyon, when she saw me, she turned alternately from red to white, and was even weak enough to give public vent to her fury.

Maréchale de Mirepoix, to whom I had confided my secret, and of whose fidelity I was assured, was present at the fête. I availed myself of the offer of a seat near her, and directly we were seated, "You are a clever creature," said she, "for you have completely bewildered all the female part of this evening's society, and by way of a finishing stroke will run away with the hearts of all the flutterers here, before the fair ladies they were previously hovering around have recovered their first astonishment."

"Upon my word," said I, smiling, "I do not wonder at the kind looks with which the ladies favour me, if my presence is capable of producing so much mischief."

The commencement of a play which formed part of the evening's entertainment obliged us to cease further conversation.

The first piece represented was *Rose et Colas*, a charming pastoral, to which the music of Monsigny gave a fresh charm ; the actors were selected from among the best of the Comédie Italienne—the divine Clairval, and the fascinating Mademoiselle Caroline. I was completely enchanted whilst the play lasted ; I forgot both my cabals and recent triumph, and for a while believed myself actually transported to the rural scenes it represented, surrounded by the honest villagers so well depicted.

Rose et Colas was followed by a species of comedy mixed with songs. The performers in this little piece, who were Favart the actor and Voisenon the priest, must have been fully satisfied with the reception they obtained, for the comedy was applauded as though it had been one of the *chefs-d'œuvre* of Voltaire. The fête in itself was most splendidly and tastefully conducted, and might have sent the different visitors home pleased and gratified in an eminent degree, had not spite and ill-nature suggested to Madame de la Vauguyon, that as the chancellor and myself were present, it must necessarily have been given with a view of complimenting us rather than Madame de Provence. She even sought to irritate the dauphiness by insinuating the same mean and contemptible observations; and so far did she succeed, that when Madame de Valentinois approached to express her hopes that the entertainment which she had honoured with her presence had been to her royal highness's satisfaction, the dauphiness coolly replied, "Do not, madame, affect to style this evening's fête one bestowed in honour of myself, or any part of my family; 'tis true we have been the ostensible causes, and have, by our presence, given it all the effect you desired, but you will pardon our omitting to thank you for an attention, which was, in reality, directed to the Comtesse du Barri and M. de Maupeou."

Madame de Valentinois came to me with tears in her eyes to repeat the cruel remark of the princess. The Maréchale de Mirepoix, who heard her, sought to console her by assurances, that it would in no degree affect her interest at Court. "Never mind, my good friend," said she, "the pretty bird merely warbles the notes it learns from its keeper la Vauguyon, and will as quickly forget as learn them. Nevertheless, the king owes you a recompense for the vexation it has occasioned you."

Immediately I found myself alone with the maréchale,

I inquired of her what was the nature of the reparation she considered Madame de Valentinois entitled to expect from the hands of his majesty. She replied, "'Tis on your account alone that the poor countess has received her late mortification; the king is therefore bound to atone for it in the form of a pension. Money, my dear, money is a sovereign cure at Court; it calms every grief and heals every wound."

I fully agreed with the good-natured maréchale; and, when I bade the sorrowful Madame de Valentinois good night, I assured her I would implore his majesty to repair the mischief my presence had caused. Accordingly, on the following day, when the king questioned me as to how far I had been amused with the fête given by Madame de Valentinois, I availed myself of the opening to state my entire satisfaction, as well as to relate the disgrace into which she had fallen, and to pray of his majesty to bestow upon her a pension of 15,000 livres.

"Upon my word," exclaimed Louis XV, hastily traversing the chamber, "this fête seems likely to prove a costly one to me."

"Nay, sire," said I, "it was a most delightful evening; and you will not, I hope, refuse me such a trifle for those who lavished so much for my amusement."

"Well," cried he, "be it so; the countess shall have the sum she requires, but upon condition that she does not apply to me again."

"Really, your majesty talks," replied I, "as though this trifling pension were to be drawn from your own privy purse."

The king began to smile at my remark, like a man who knows himself found out. I knew him well enough to be certain that, had he intended the pension awarded Madame de Valentinois to come from his own privy purse, he would scarcely have consented to bestowing on

her more than a shabby pittance of a thousand livres per annum. It is scarcely possible to conceive an idea of the excessive economy of this prince. I remember, that upon some great occasion, when it was requisite to support the public treasury, which was failing, by a timely contribution, the Duc de Choiseul offered the loan of 250,000 livres, whilst the king, to the astonishment of all who heard him, confined his aid to 2000 louis! The Maréchale de Mirepoix used to assert that Louis XV was the only prince of his line who ever knew the value of a crown. She had, nevertheless, managed to receive plenty from him, although, I must own, that she had had no small difficulty in obtaining them; not did the king part with his beloved gold without many a sigh of regret.

CHAPTER VII

WOE TO MY ENEMIES

On the evening of the 23rd of December, his majesty having engaged to sup with me, I had invited M. de Maupeou, the Duc de la Vrillière, and the Prince de Soubise. It appears that the king, previously to coming, had gone to visit the dauphiness; he had not mentioned whither he was going, so that his attendants believed him to be in my apartments, and directed M. d'Oigny, post-master-general, to seek him there. The baron brought with him a packet of opened letters; when he saw me alone he wished to retire, for the servants, believing him to be one of the expected guests, had ushered him in. However, I would not permit him to go until the king's arrival; and, half sportively, half seriously, I took from him his letters, protesting I would detain them as hostages for his obedience to my desires. At this moment Louis entered the room; and M. d'Oigny, having briefly stated his business, bowed and departed.

When we were left to ourselves, I said to the king:

"Now, then, for this interesting and amusing budget; for such, I doubt not, it will prove."

"Not so fast, madam, if you please," replied Louis; "perhaps these papers may contain State secrets, unfit for your eye."

"Great secrets they must be," said I, laughing, "confided thus to the carelessness of the post."

So saying, I broke the seal of the envelope so hastily, that the greater part of the letters and notes were scattered voer the carpet.

I stooped to collect the fallen papers, and the king had the gallantry to assist me: we soon piled the various letters upon a tray, and began eagerly to glance over their contents. My good fortune made me select from the mass those epistles addressed to the members of the country parliaments; they were filled with invectives against me, insulting mention of the king, and praises of the Duc de Choiseul. I took especial care to read them in a loud and distinct voice.

"This really is not to be endured," cried Louis; "that the mistaken zeal of these long-robed gentlemen should make them thus compliment my minister at my expense."

"So much the worse for you, sire," replied I, "considering that you continue to prefer your minister to every other consideration."

As I continued searching through the letters, I found and read the following phrase:

"'Spite of the reports in circulation, I do not believe it possible that M. de Choiseul will be dismissed; he is too necessary to the king, who, without him, would be as incapable as a child of managing his affairs: his majesty must preserve our friend in office in spite of himself.'"

When I had finished, the king exclaimed, in an angry tone, "We shall see how far the prophecy of these sapient gentlemen is correct, and whether their 'friend' is so important to me that I dare not dismiss him."

Whilst these words were speaking, M. de Maupeou and M. de la Vrillière were announced; the king, still warm, let fall some words expressive of his displeasure at what had happened. The gauntlet was thrown; and so well did we work upon the irritated mind of Louis, that it was determined M. de Choiseul should be dismissed the following day, December 24, 1770. Chanteloup was chosen for the place of his retreat, and M. de la Vrillière,

by the dictation of the king, wrote the following letter to the duke :

Cousin,—The dissatisfaction caused me by your conduct compels me to request you will confine yourself to your estate at Chanteloup, whither you will remove in four-and-twenty hours from the date hereof. I should have chosen a more remote spot for your place of exile, were it not for the great esteem I entertain for the Duchesse de Choiseul, in whose delicate health I feel much interest. Have a care that you do not, by your own conduct, oblige me to adopt harsher measures ; and hereupon I pray God to have you in his keeping.

(Signed) Louis,
(and lower down) *Philippeaux.*

When this letter was completed, I said to the king :

" Surely, sire, you do not mean to forget the duke's faithful ally, M. de Praslin? It would ill become us to detain him when the head of the family has taken leave of us."

" You are right," replied the king, smiling ; " besides, an old broom taken from a mast-head would be as useful to us as he would."

Then, turning to M. de la Vrillière, the king dictated the following laconic notice :

Cousin,—I have no further occasion for your services ; I exile you to Praslin, and expect you will repair thither within four-and-twenty hours after the receipt of this.

" Short and sweet," cried I.

" Now let us drop the subject," said Louis. " Let Madame de Choiseul repose in peace to-night, and to-morrow morning, at eleven o'clock, go yourself, M. de la Vrillière, and carry my orders to the duke, and bring back his staff of office."

"To whom will you give it, sire?" inquired the chancellor.

"I have not yet considered the subject," replied the king.

At this instant M. de Soubise was announced. "*Motus!*" exclaimed the king, as M. de Soubise, little suspecting the nature of our conversation, entered the room. I profitted by his coming to slip out of the room into my boudoir, from which I despatched the following note to M. d'Aiguillon:

My dear Duke,—Victoria! We are conquerors: master and man quit Paris to-morrow.

I had hoped that the king would this night have retired to his own apartment, and that I should have been enabled to hold a secret council with M. de Maupeou, and the Ducs de la Vrillière and d'Aiguillon; but no such thing. His majesty insisted upon remaining with me, and I was compelled to acquiesce. He passed a very agitated night, much more occupied with the Choiseuls than me; he could think of nothing, speak of nothing, but the sensation which their disgrace would produce; he seemed to dread his family, the nobility, the nation, Europe, and the whole world. I strove to reassure him, and to inspire him with fresh courage; and, when he quitted me I felt convinced that he would not again alter his determination.

It was not long ere the Duc d'Aiguillon arrived; he had seen M. de Maupeou during the night, and learned from him the exile of the late minister, but beyond that fact he knew nothing. He inquired of me, with much uneasiness, whether anything had been decided in his behalf. I replied that the king was as yet undecided in his choice of ministers, but that, if the Duc d'Aiguillon came into office, he would, in all probability, be nominated



ETIENNE FRANÇOIS, DUC DE CHOISEUL
From the painting by Van Loo, Versailles.

to the administration of foreign affairs: the direction of the war-office had been my noble friend's ardent desire.

Whilst we were thus conversing on the 24th of December, 1770, eleven o'clock struck; and we could, from the windows, perceive M. de la Vrillière making his way towards that part of the building occupied by M. de Choiseul when at the castle. This latter was in conversation with M. Conzié, Bishop of Arras, when the arrival of the Duc de la Vrillière, bearing the king's commands, was signified to him. The prelate, not doubting but the mission related to affairs of importance, took his leave. M. de la Vrillière then presented the *lettre de cachet*, accompanying it with some remarks of his own upon the talents of the minister, and his regret at being selected for so unpleasant an office. "A truce to your feigned regrets, my lord duke," replied the disgraced minister, sarcastically, "I am well assured my dismissa could not have been brought me by hands more ready to discharge the trust than yours." Saying this, M. de Choiseul placed his credentials in the hands of the duke, and, slightly bowing, turned his back upon him, as though he had forgotten his presence.

M. de Choiseul then retired to summon his sister, to communicate to her and his wife the misfortune which had befallen him: he then set out for Paris, to make the necessary preparations for removing to Chanteloup.

In the exile of the duke was seen a thing unheard of, perhaps, before, and, in all probability, unlikely ever to occur again—the sight of a whole Court espousing the part of an exiled minister, and openly censuring the monarch who could thus reward his services. A long file of carriages for two days blocked up the road to Chanteloup. In vain did Louis express his dissatisfaction; his Court flocked in crowds to visit M. de Choiseul.

On the other hand, the castle was not in a more tranquil state. At the news of the dismissal and banishment of M. de Choiseul, a general hue and cry was raised against me and my friends. The princesses were loud in their anger, and accused me publicly of having conspired against virtue itself! The dauphiness bewailed his fall with many tears; at least, so I was informed by a lady of her suite, Madame de Campan. This lady was a most loquacious person; she frequently visited my sister-in-law; and, thanks to her love of talking, we were always well informed of all that was passing in the household of Marie Antoinette. However, the dauphin was far from sharing the grief of his illustrious spouse. When informed of the dismissal of the duke, he cried out, "Well, Madame du Barri has saved me an infinity of trouble—that of getting rid of so dangerous a man, in the event of my ever ascending the throne." The prince did not usually speak of me in the most flattering terms, but I forgave him on the present occasion, so much was I charmed with his expression relative to the late minister; it afforded me the certainty that I should not have to dread the possibility of his recalling de Choiseul.

The grand crisis had terminated to my advantage; the Choiseul party was destitute of any leader, and to the late rebellious parliaments had succeeded a supple and pacific magistracy, so that we could breathe freely, as well as look forward with confidence to the future. Nevertheless, one minister still remained—this was the Bishop of Orleans, a man wholly unworthy of his high office, from the scandalous immorality of his life; besides which, he had ever been the chosen friend and firm ally of the Duc de Choiseul and, consequently, could not remain in power after his patron's disgrace. However, as he was by no means a favourite with the king, he did not give us much uneasiness, more especially as we knew we

could easily get rid of him whenever our interest seemed to require his downfall.

"Sire," said I, one day to the king, "what are you going to do with M. de Jarente? Would it not be as well to send this worthy pastor back to his flock?"

"With all my heart," answered Louis XV; "but whom shall we put in his place?"

"The beloved Bishop de Senlis," cried I; "a prelate esteemed by every one; not displeasing to me, and justly honoured with your favour and regard, as well as that of your royal daughters."

"I am sorry to disappoint your wishes," said the king, "but M. de Senlis is not calculated for the successor of M. d'Orleans, whom, at your desire, I am willing to remove from his see. As for who shall be invested with the vacant bishopric, it must be a matter for further and mature consideration; for the present, the grand almoner shall be temporary director of church benefices."

"As you please, sire," answered I; "the change can scarcely be for the worse."

This grand almoner was the Cardinal de la Roche Aymon, a man of little mind, and wholly devoid of genius, but crafty and servile. Of all the individuals who, from humble beginnings, have attained riches and eminence, few could boast equal good fortune with M. de la Roche Aymon, who, rather crawling than walking, and bowing even to the ground before all whose necks he was ready to tread on, so that they could serve him as a stepping-stone, had risen to the exalted station he at present occupied. To the many other useful and convenient qualities possessed by this gentleman, were those of always agreeing in sentiments with the last speaker, and never meddling with any Court intrigue unless for his own interest. He was a living instance of how little merit has to do with Court favours and success.

M. de la Roche Aymon was not slow in making the most courteous advances to me. Forgetful of the dignity of his character and office, as well as the doubtful situation in which I stood, he came boldly to pay his devoirs at my first arrival at Versailles. He came one morning quite early to pay his respects, accompanied with Geraud, Archbishop of Damas, and nuncio to the Pope, as great a flatterer as himself, but possessed of a far more active spirit. The nuncio, a real Italian, bore on his countenance the stamp of his country; he was a mixture of knavery, cunning, malice, good-nature and wit; ever on the watch, neither word nor look escaped his scrutiny. This continual tension and straining of the mind rendered him wearying when he might have been agreeable; he possessed many solid qualities, which he employed to the advantage of his compatriots and by means of which he continued to wage war against our party at Versailles.

Both he and the grand almoner never failed to attend my toilette, and it might have caused a smile of surprise and pity to see these two venerable successors of the apostles performing the duties of lady's maid, and disputing for the honour of presenting me with the different ornaments looked out for my use.

Meanwhile, I was unceasingly occupied in urging the king to keep his promise regarding the Duc d'Aiguillon. The duke, informed of the efforts I was making in his favour, would not run the risk of destroying my good intents by making his appearance at the battle I was about to fight for him. About the end of May he set out for his estate at Vernet, in order that his appointment, should it take place, might appear the spontaneous act of the monarch's free will and choice. Scarcely had he quitted Paris before I began to broach the subject which lay so near my heart; to all I advanced the king offered objections, which appeared to me as though they had been

suggested to him; but I was not so easily repulsed, and fortunately the chancellor came most opportunely to my assistance.

"Sire," said he to the king, "you have deigned to honour me with your confidence, and I am in duty bound to state to your majesty that mine is entirely bestowed upon the Duc d'Aiguillon, who is the only man from whom I shall henceforward receive counsel or support."

"I have a great regard for the duke," replied the king; "but he is displeasing to my family and the public——" He stopped.

"Then, sire," exclaimed the chancellor, "you must give him up to the condemnation of the parliament of Bretagne or that of Paris. Your majesty has not adjudged him guilty, and therefore should treat him as though he were innocent."

This argument seemed unanswerable; and Louis XV, yielding to our representations, on the 5th of June, 1771, appointed the Duc d'Aiguillon minister of foreign affairs.

There was a lady in Paris at this time who deserves some mention. This was Madame du Deffant. Madame du Deffant was of high birth and great attainments, and by now far advanced in years; she lived about nine years after the period I am speaking of. She had passed her life much as the generality of ladies of her rank usually do; that is to say, in a mixture of folly and thoughtlessness and, as report said, she had commenced her search after pleasure at a very early age, abandoning herself freely to the allurements by which she was surrounded. Nevertheless, this giddy levity appears in no way to have compromised her reputation, and her errors were all forgotten and forgiven in consideration of her birth, her numerous connections with the most distinguished persons in the kingdom, and still more were they excused by the richness of her mind and the cultivation of her under-

standing. When maturer years had corrected the flightiness of her conduct, without improving or purifying her heart (for she never appears to have possessed one), she retired to the convent of St Joseph; where, although blind, she continued until her death to assemble around her the best society of Paris. She was the intimate friend of Voltaire, d'Alembert, and all the principal *literati* of the day. Among the number of her female acquaintances were Mesdames de Luxembourg, de Mirepoix, de Boufflers, de Forcalquier, d'Aiguillon, de Beauvau, de Choiseul, de Crussol, etc. Among her male visitors were Messieurs de Choiseul, de Beauffremont, de Beauvau, de Lauzun.

Devoted to the Choiseuls, to whom she was allied, she attached herself to their house and fortunes with the most zealous regard, espousing their interests with a warmth and activity that knew no bounds. She spared no means of annoying me; sometimes seeking to wound me by the bitter sarcasm of her letters and writings, and occasionally publishing the severest epigrams upon me. These attempts to injure me, although affording just cause for complaint, I pardoned, from consideration for the Duc d'Aiguillon, whose wife and mother were amongst the number of her friends. Madame de Mirepoix and herself mutually exchanged visits, nor did the wide dissimilarity of taste between these ladies oppose any bar to an intimacy which only appeared more extraordinary from the incongruous qualities of which their union was made up.

Such a one was the Marquise du Deffant, with whom my friends sought to bring me on visiting terms, but I refused. I had received too much offence from the manner in which she had spoken of me in her correspondence with the Englishman Walpole—a correspondence of which I had many opportunities of judging whenever the postmaster-general laid the letters from his office before the king.

Although Louis XV had a great objection to receive at his Court any of the foreign princes who were mostly curious to visit France, there were yet several who, spite of all difficulties, came from afar to see and admire the wonders of Paris. Amongst the number was the crown prince of Sweden, who, in the full expectation that, ere long, the sceptre of Sweden would pass into his hand, was traversing Europe to perfect himself in the art of governing. Louis received the young hero with less reluctance than he generally manifested upon such occasions, and soon became fascinated with his ingenuous manners, set off, as they were, by an urbanity truly Parisian.

The king was so warm in his commendation of this son of the north that my curiosity was excited; and I begged that I might have the gratification of seeing him at supper. I had heard that he professed to care but little for our sex; that he was a second Hippolytus, cold, haughty, and indifferent. This account only augmented my desire of judging for myself how far this reputation was merited; and I can only say, that whilst in my presence, and within the range of my observation, I found him as pleasing as he was handsome; nor could I discover in his warm and animated glances any of that apathy with which he had been charged. His conversation was pleasing in the highest degree, and delighted me as well as the king, whose favour he was anxious to obtain, no doubt with a view to forward the great political stroke he meditated.

"Comte de Haga," said Louis, "Sweden is a fine kingdom."

"It would," replied the person addressed, "make a fine province of France; its inhabitants are Frenchmen in their hearts; and, for my own part, I feel myself more than ever bound to France by the gracious and flattering reception your majesty has been pleased to afford me."

This compliment was uttered as rapidly as thought.

The Comte de Haga was accompanied by his brother, the Duke of Sudermania, who, unless I am greatly deceived, is not destined to acquire the high renown of Gustavus III. His sinister look was far from inspiring the same prepossession in his favour, nor was he gifted with the winning frankness which so strongly characterized his brother. These two princes, delighted at seeing and inquiring into everything worthy of observation, could, with the most easy condescension, lay aside their high rank; and this effectual appeal to the confidence of all ranks made their appearance at Paris the most successful *début* that had been made by royalty within the oldest recollection.

It was on the 1st of March, 1771, that the prince received at Paris the news of his father's decease. Thus invested with regal honours whilst traversing the world as a simple individual, immediately that the information reached him, he hastened to despatch Comte Scheffer to Versailles, to communicate the important tidings to the king. Louis was still in bed when the envoy-extraordinary arrived; nevertheless, that he might give the young monarch a proof of his regard, he caused M. Scheffer to be admitted to his bedside. This latter, having paid his respects, and announced the accession of the young and handsome traveller to the throne, Louis inquired whether the new king of Sweden was desirous of being henceforward received with royal honours; adding, that, if so, the necessary orders should immediately be issued. The count replied that his Swedish majesty would prefer retaining his incognito for the present, and would wish still to be considered only as the Comte de Haga.

It was not long before the king of Sweden invited himself to supper, entreating me to suffer none but the chancellor, the Duc d'Aiguillon, and a third person, whom he did not venture to name, but at whose hands

he had a great favour to solicit, to be present. I showed his note to Louis, who easily guessed that by the third person alluded to was meant himself. He promised to attend with the Duc de Duras. "And should the king of Sweden have aught to speak of in private," added he, "the good duke will never suspect the importance of the matters upon which we confer."

Gustavus III made his appearance, attended only by Comte Scheffer, who enjoyed his entire confidence. He seemed disappointed at the sight of M. de Duras; and, when I repeated what Louis had said, he smiled, and answered, "Nevertheless, madam, I must be silent in his presence."

I communicated these words to the king, who caused the Duc de Duras to be informed immediately by the chancellor that a council was about to be held, at which his presence would not be required; but the same intimation requiring the absence of the Duc d'Aiguillon, forced him to retire also, to our great regret. When the two monarchs, the chancellor, Comte Scheffer and myself were alone, Gustavus III opened the conversation by announcing his firm resolution of claiming back from the seditious nobles those rights which they had usurped from his ancestors. He then proceeded to lay before the king the plan he proposed to follow, ending it with a request to be assisted by the counsel and protection of his royal ally. Louis promptly engaged to aid him, by every possible means, in the accomplishment of so magnanimous a determination.

"Your majesty," said he, "is young, and possessed of more than usual courage. You can and ought to chastise those rebels who have dared to tear by violence from their sovereigns those rights which they derive from God himself. You may rely upon my hearty co-operation; and, should your own finances be unequal to defray the

necessary expenses, you may freely command my purse. I am only too anxious to keep up the good understanding subsisting between our houses." Gustavus was so enchanted with this frank declaration that, without considering what he was about, he seized the hand of Louis and was about to press it to his lips; but the king, inclining his face towards him, exclaimed:

"Ah, my brother, let us rather ratify our newly-formed treaty by a friendly embrace."

"Sire," cried Gustavus, throwing himself into the king's arms, "you are my second father, and may always confidently reckon upon receiving from me the tenderness of a son."

This touching scene brought tears into my eyes; and even the chancellor exhibited symptoms of the liveliest emotion. After this the two kings and their respective ministers conferred upon the best method of affording the Swedish prince the assistance he claimed. Whilst this interesting discussion was going forwards, I was amusing myself with my dog. Gustavus, who perceived it, sent me the following day a collar for the little animal, composed of red morocco, with a clasp and ring of brilliants, to which was affixed a chain of more than a yard in length, composed entirely of rubies. The magnificence of this present astonished me so much the more as the king of Sweden was by no means rich; however, this piece of gallantry was most graciously received by Louis, and materially heightened the favourable opinion he had conceived of the royal stranger.

When Gustavus had retired, Louis expressed his admiration of him with the utmost candour. "Unless I greatly mistake," added he, "our noble young Swede will one day rival Prussia in power. I own I shall not be sorry to see my prediction fulfilled, and I will gladly afford my best aid to assist him; besides, I like to find my example has

power to lead others to imitate it; his senate resembles my parliament. Nothing can be more dangerous for monarchs than those debating assemblies where subjects have the audacity to treat their masters as though they were their equals, and even to attempt to hold them in subjection. I would not be king of England for one year, if I were compelled to endure the insupportable prosing of the Houses of Lords and Commons."

These expressions of the king recall to my recollection the language held by one of his grandsons long afterwards. It was about the period of the American War, the English parliament had compelled George III to dismiss his ministers. The haughty and noble French prince could not conceive the possibility of there existing in a kingdom a body sufficiently influential to constrain the sovereign pleasure in the choice of his ministers; and he expressed his opinion with some warmth in presence of the English ambassador.

"If," said he, "ministers are to be dismissed because the parliament does not think proper to approve of them, a stable-boy is better off than the king of England."

"Sire," replied Lord Stair, "that must depend upon a man's tastes and habits."

This year was celebrated the marriage of the Comte de Provence,[1] then little more than fifteen years of age, with Princesse Marie Josephine Louise, of Savoy, who was about two years older than her husband. This excellent young lady, whose many virtues justly entitled her to the love of the whole nation, was, unfortunately, very plain. However, the eagerness with which he welcomed his bride served effectually to re-establish him in the opinion of both married and single. On the other hand, the young and innocent princess displayed the most

[1] Afterwards Louis XVIII. His younger brother, Comte d'Artois became Charles X.

undisguised affection for her youthful partner, as well as eagerness for the performance of the rite which united them for life; and it was with much difficulty that they were restrained from too openly exhibiting their mutual fondness in the presence of the whole Court.

The Comte d'Artois, who was still quite young, joked his brother upon the exceeding energy and loudness of tone with which, in the nuptial ceremony, he had made the responses.

"Do you know," said he, "that you answered '*I will*' so loud, that the room re-echoed with it."

"I could have wished," replied the Comte de Provence, with his accustomed sweetness of temper, "that the sound had reached from Paris to Turin."

The marriage of the Comte de Provence was, for a long time, the subject of conversation in our private apartments, as well as that of the dauphin. The contrast of the manners of the two husbands, and their conduct towards their august spouses, amused us greatly; whilst the Comte de Provence, more warm, more ardent in all his feelings than his brother, was incessantly occupied in affectionate and tender cares for his young bride, whom he loaded with caresses, the Duc de Berri, more timid and retiring in his nature, still only presumed to treat the dauphiness with the respectful fondness of a beloved sister. Louis, who found much to interest him in this display of a purely fraternal affection, held many conferences upon a subject which baffled all his endeavours to account for.

But the youngest of the princes, the Comte d'Artois, required all the watchful solicitude of the Duc de la Vauguyon. This young prince was of a most impetuous and impatient temperament, quick, volatile, and headstrong, he spurned all restraint; whilst, tenacious of the least attempt at depriving him of his liberty, he only

plunged more eagerly into pleasures wholly unfit for his tender years. Sometimes the object of his pursuits was a *femme de chambre ;* at others, the modest wife of some subaltern officer, whose heart he sought to win by his honeyed words and flattering promises. In a word, the Comte d'Artois was a miniature resemblance of Henry IV. This early indication of so strong an admiration for female beauty impressed every one with the idea that he would, when age should have more sobered his youthful effervescence, become the most gallant of French chevaliers, as he already was one of the most pleasing and captivating. All this impetuosity found a ready excuse in the mind of Louis XV, who seemed to see his own image revived in the gay and indiscreet young prince ; and, spite of himself, he ever treated the Comte d'Artois with a marked preference.

CHAPTER VIII

THE KING'S FAMILY HATE ME

The arrival of Marie Antoinette in France, in all the splendour of her rank, her age, beauty, wit, and virtues, could not fail to be highly displeasing to me; I dreaded lest she might acquire over the mind of the king that ascendancy to which she had so just a claim; and still further, that she would employ the many gifts with which heaven had endowed her to my prejudice. Her marriage, effected by the Duc de Choiseul, had naturally given that minister a large share in her good graces; besides which, I well knew that the princesses, who no longer sought to conceal their aversion to me, were impatiently awaiting the arrival of the young dauphiness, that they might, in concert with her, effect my ruin. The dauphin had openly evinced the unfavourable nature of his sentiments towards me: the king was feeble in purpose and timid by nature, unstable in his own disposition, and not very prone to rouse himself to any particular exertion for the preservation of his friends. All these reasons combined to excite within me a spirit of jealousy, distrust, and uneasiness, as well as to convince me that peace would not reign long between the dauphiness and myself.

The princesses lost no time in protesting to their niece that if she allowed her balls and parties to be profaned by my presence, they must for the future be excused from attending; and the dauphiness, respecting these preconcerted notions of her aunts, forbore to invite me. I was deeply wounded by this stroke of malice, and in my turn shed tears over it, while Louis, well disposed to look

upon this mode of treating me as a personal offence and indirect censure upon his own conduct, seized the first opportunity of demanding of the dauphiness the reason of the neglect I had so much reason to complain of.

Marie Antoinette replied that her royal aunts, having expressed a repugnance to meet me, she had considered it a duty to prefer their company to that of a stranger, but that, nevertheless, if his majesty expressly laid his commands upon her, I should certainly be invited. Taken by surprise, Louis knew not what to say; he therefore changed the conversation as quickly as he could, and returned to me without having effected anything.

Things were in this train, when the dauphiness refused to be present at a review at Fontainebleau, and to dine beneath the tent which the Comte du Châtelet had caused to be pitched in the wood. When this nobleman presented himself before Marie Antoinette, to invite her to the fête, her first inquiry was, "Will the Comtesse du Barri be there?" She was answered in the affirmative. "In that case, sir," replied the princess, "she may take my place, for I will never endure her presence."

The Comte du Châtelet had strong claims upon my gratitude for his kindness in concealing this conversation from all but myself, but the dauphiness could not deny herself the gratification of boasting of what she had said and done, and this was no small consolation to the almost expiring party of the Choiseuls; but I soon had the laugh on my side, when, declining further warfare with her royal highness, I assailed the duke, who had hitherto directed all the attacks of my enemies; and the fall of this minister, who, as the archduchess knew, had had the principal hand in effecting her marriage, caused her the most lively chagrin. In vain did she apply to the king to avert the threatened blow; he remained immovable and unshaken in the resolution with which I had inspired him.

Such were the principal causes which brought about an open struggle between the dauphiness and myself. Her husband, who thoroughly hated me, contented himself with offering me such childish annoyances as the following, which my enemies took pains to circulate throughout France. We were at Bellevue, and had already sat down to dinner, when all at once the dauphin arrived *by accident*. I was seated at the right of Louis XV, and consequently I occupied his place; he walked directly up to me as though to claim it, when, anticipating his purpose, I rose and offered him my chair, making him at the same time a low and respectful curtsy. He did not expect that I should thus deprive him of the opportunity of openly offering me an act of impoliteness; he just cast upon me a look full of vexation and rage, and, muttering between his teeth some species of compliment, sat down hastily. The king bit his lips and remained silent for some time; but, recovering himself by degrees, he strove to make amends for the rudeness of his grandson by treating me with the most marked kindness during the whole of the dinner. As for me, delighted at having the laugh on my side, I ate my dinner with an excellent appetite; and, far from sitting sullenly, as my enemies were pleased to state, I continued in the highest and happiest spirits during the whole of the evening.

Whilst the breach was thus daily widening between myself and the virtuous and august pair who were destined one day to ascend the throne of France, a prince of the blood-royal evinced every disposition to be upon good terms with me, and even commissioned a gentleman of his establishment to converse with me upon the subject. What the motives were which actuated this proceeding I am to this day ignorant of. The particulars of the transaction are as follows:

The hatred with which both the dauphiness and

dauphin regarded me was no secret at Court. Many expressed their astonishment that I did not seek to anticipate the vengeance they would one day or other pour down upon me, and gloomy hints of assassination and poison began to be whispered throughout the castle, but I contented myself with avenging my wrongs in a manner more consonant to the feelings of my heart; and, far from seeking the life of those who had offended me, I directed all my endeavours to falsify that beauty the dauphiness so justly prided herself in, and by this means only more fully demonstrated how little I cared for truth or justice where my angry feelings were excited.

Whilst these things were going on I received several visits in the interval of a very few days from the Marquis de Montesquieu, first gentleman-in-waiting to his royal highness the Comte de Provence. This unusual assiduity surprised me, and I could not forbear speaking to my sister-in-law, Chon, of the multiplied attentions I was now honoured with from that nobleman.

"Excellent," said my sister-in-law, with her usual perspicacity; "and do you imagine this gay bird frequents your drawing-rooms only to display his own warbling? No such thing; as surely as possible he is merely the envoy of some great and powerful person."

"Who can you allude to?" cried I.

"Oh, sister," answered Chon, "you can be very simple sometimes. Just think in whose service the marquis is, and the next time he comes turn the conversation upon his master."

It was not long before the Marquis de Montesquieu afforded me the desired opportunity by repeating his visit. Profiting by the counsel of Chon, I made many inquiries after the Comte and Comtesse de Provence, extolling the former in the highest terms.

"I am delighted," exclaimed the marquis, "to find so

reciprocal a feeling existing between yourself and his royal highness, whose sentiments respecting you are of the most flattering nature; and however unfavourable the heads of some establishments may be towards you, I can assure you it is greatly the reverse with my illustrious patron."

"It gratifies me to hear so pleasing an assurance," answered I, "and the kindness of the Comte de Provence will enable me to bear with more patience the insults I am exposed to from other members of his family."

"Be satisfied, madam," interrupted M. de Montesquieu, "that you are looked upon in a very different light by the prince I have the honour to serve."

"I pray of you, then," said I, "to convey to their royal highnesses the expressions of my profound respect and devoted attachment."

From that time their royal highnesses treated me with the most flattering marks of distinction; they even invited me to a splendid fête. But it would seem that the dauphin and dauphiness complained to their brother and sister-in-law of their intimacy with me; for, all at once, without any cause or reason, the Comte and Comtesse de Provence resumed their original distance and reserve; and the Marquis de Montesquieu ceased his accustomed visits. I was cruelly vexed at seeing a friendship, so frankly offered me, thus destroyed. Nevertheless, I smothered my angry feelings, and imitated my enemies in the closest observance of every prescribed form of politeness, but when I subsequently encountered M. de Montesquieu, I spoke to him of the vacillating conduct both of himself and his master, to which he replied, "Your pardon, madam; but we could not make up our minds to force so lovely a woman into a political intrigue."

In consequence of the refusal of the princes of the blood to be present at the installation of the new parliament,

they were not directly exiled, but requested, in a more civil and polite manner, to abstain from approaching Versailles. They would willingly have defied the king's resentment, but their heroism sank from its altitude when they perceived that their allowances, which had been hitherto paid in the form of additional pensions, were now stopped.

One day I saw the Princesse de Conti enter my apartment without the least ceremony; she was an old lady, justly revered by myself and all mankind for her many virtues and rare qualities. I was utterly unprepared for this visit, and, confused at the unexpected honour done me, endeavoured to show my sense of her condescension by every attention in my power, whilst I listened anxiously to hear the extraordinary motive which had induced her to present herself at my door. She assured me that she came with the best possible intentions; that her desire was to pacify things, and allay the present agitation of mind, but to effect this my aid would be necessary. She added:

"Many ill-disposed persons are anxious to create a quarrel between you and the princes. Have a care, my child! you are placed in a critical situation, and whatever unfortunate events may occur, depend upon it they will be severely visited upon your head. The people and the Court are equally irritated against you; and, should a misfortune, which I will not venture to anticipate, occur, you would remain alone and unprotected, a mark for public hatred to expend its violence upon. Why not seek to create for yourself some sure resting-place? A safe and sure asylum is open to you in espousing the cause of the princes; if you uphold them in their present difficulties, gratitude will compel them to protect you in their turn, nor will they ever forsake you."

"Alas! madame," cried I, "how can I help it, if it is

the pleasure of their highnesses to contradict and thwart the king in his projects ? I know very well how precarious is my existence ; and I must confess that the thoughts of the future give me very little concern. But what I really regret, is to be mistaken for the enemy of the princes of the blood, when I would willingly prove my attachment to them by every possible means."

" Well, then, you would be the most excellent creature alive," cried the princess, " if you could prevail on the king to command the restoration of the private pensions of the princes."

" Doubtless, madam," said I, " these pensions are very desirable things ; but would it not be better for the princes to obtain a perfect reconciliation with the king ? "

" I see numerous difficulties to that measure," answered the princess ; " his majesty will not renounce his new parliament, and the princes will never acknowledge it but upon certain conditions."

" I understand," cried I ; " they will never cease their opposition till they find it their interest so to do."

The Princesse de Conti, who possessed a quick and ready wit, understood my meaning, and smiled at my observation. She repeated all her former arguments, and I engaged to use my endeavours to satisfy the princes, with which her serene highness expressed herself much pleased, and retired charmed with her visit.

Shortly after she had left me the chancellor arrived, to whom I related all that had passed. M. de Maupeou pointed out to me that the sole aim and purpose of the princes in seeking my favour was to procure the restoration of their pensions ; that it was utterly impossible for them ever to afford me the least protection, or to render me any service. He added, " We no longer live in those days when the interference of a prince of the blood could avert

the anger of a king. Two centuries ago their refusal to acknowledge a parliament would have thrown the kingdom into a state of ferment from one end to the other; but now, although they have protested against the new parliament, they are merely dispensed from appearing at it; and, while they grow sullen at the little notice they have the power to excite, they are utterly forgotten; they are, in fact, mere citizens like myself, courtiers in the castle and disgraced men in the city. What protection could they afford you, when they are compelled to solicit yours?"

Just then the Duc d'Aiguillon and the Abbé Terray entered; we related to them the subject of conversation, and they both agreed with the chancellor in his view of the case. It was therefore agreed that I should return the visit with which the Princesse de Conti had honoured me, and inform her I found it impossible to effect anything with the king in favour of the exiled princes.

However, when I saw his majesty in the evening, I communicated to him their message. "Upon my word," cried Louis, "I admire their effrontery; they think proper to refuse me the obedience to which I am justly entitled, and yet they ask for my money. No, no! *parbleu!* Not one farthing shall they see of it till they return to their duty. Let them resume their proper allegiance, and I may then listen to their request; this is my determination; tell the Princesse de Conti so."

This, by the way, was a piece of intelligence not very pleasing to be the bearer of. Nevertheless, on the following day I went to pay my visit to the princess. I told her that I attempted, but vainly, to move the king in favour of the princes, but that his majesty refused to listen to any argument until they evinced a perfect submission to his will. "For my own interests and preservation," said I, "I must confide in the justice of my sovereign, and trust

that it will never fail me at any period." The princess replied very coolly, and permitted me to depart without observing the most trifling rule of common civility towards me. When the princes learned the result of their scheme they were filled with the bitterest rage.

CHAPTER IX

MY ENEMIES ARE AWAKE

The Prince de Conti, although gifted with considerable talent, was ill calculated to play an eminent part in politics; the time which was not engrossed by his pleasures he employed in studying medals, and his love for antiquities almost equalled his admiration of the fair sex. He revived in the Isle d'Adam, and in the salons of the Temple, the frightful orgies of the regency, adding to them scenes too horrible for repetition. This antiquarian Sybarite, who had been extolled by the cabal as the most perfect hero of his time, had rendered himself a general favourite by the politeness and affability of his manners; and his obstinate stand against the king's wishes was magnified into magnanimous courage and heroic firmness.

He was far from being rich, and yet he kept up habits of profuse expenditure. It is related of him that when his treasurer came one day to inform him that his horses were entirely without food (the person who supplied their provender having refused to do so any longer unless his many claims were discharged), the prince calmly inquired whether all his other creditors were equally refractory.

"Yes, my lord," replied the treasurer, "all, with the exception of your poulterer, refuse to supply you further."

"Then," replied his highness, "feed my horses with chickens."

The king returned the fixed opposition evinced towards him by the Prince de Conti with the most determined hatred; he looked upon him as the enemy of the throne, was uneasy and restless at the most trifling action on the

prince's part, and caused him to be constantly watched by the mysterious police of the Comte de Broglie, and the official police of M. de Sartines. Nevertheless, the Prince de Conti, seeing himself the idol of the people, cared but little for all these precautions, and took especial delight in observing, on every occasion, a line of conduct diametrically opposite to that pursued at Court. His palace was the focus where the parliamentarians collected to concert fresh schemes, and project new conspiracies; and we have always believed that the pamphlets which appeared in such numbers against us, and which had for their aim the keeping up a continual ferment and irritation in the public mind, were fabricated and printed in the Temple, under the immediate inspection of his highness himself. The chancellor, who was by no means too delicately handled by this secret committee, was occasionally worked up to fits of the most violent fury with the Prince de Conti; and it was several times in serious consideration to banish him the kingdom. I can with truth affirm that but for my individual opposition, this measure would have been carried into effect. I fancied there was something great and elevated in this resistance to the wishes of a king; and a woman, as you know, is easily caught by anything which appears strikingly grand and marvellous.

The prince was well aware of the part I took in the affair, and he sent to thank me for my kindness towards him. The person charged with this commission was an Italian, named Falloni, a man of talent, who had the care and arrangement of his highness's cabinet. This Falloni, who was a dealer in curiosities, frequently called upon Comte Jean and myself. I took an opportunity to request he would say from me to his serene highness, that I trusted he would not confound me with his enemies; that if ever I meddled with politics it was always with

great reluctance, and never with the intention of injuring any person. Upon which the prince wrote me a note I have ever carefully preserved, as a very curious and important document. It was as follows :

Madame la Comtesse.—Monsieur Falloni has apprised me of your friendly disposition towards me. I beg most gratefully to thank you for your goodness, and only regret that, under existing circumstances, I cannot personally express my gratitude. I had always coupled in my own mind a beauty so rare, so perfect as yours, with a heart equally noble and excellent ; and your generous conduct towards myself leaves me only the satisfaction of finding I have rightly estimated you. Be assured, that if, whilst waging war with my enemies, any flying parties should annoy you, it will be a matter of serious regret to me ; and happy should I esteem myself if, in consequence of an honourable peace, I might come to lay down my arms at your feet.

Deign, I beseech you, to accept, etc.

I showed this letter to Louis, who read it over two separate times, then returning it with an air of impatience, he said :

" I had hoped to have found some overtures for a reconciliation, but I perceive only the expression of a commonplace gallantry."

" That is enough for me," answered I, laughing.

" Yes," replied the king, " that is the case with all you ladies ; you care very little for affairs of State, and at the first fine compliment paid you, you shout victory ! For my own part, these continued oppositions displease me greatly ; and I shall never be at rest till all the princes of my family have returned to their duty. I am willing to believe that there is no prospect of a civil war, but these

petty and daily disputes are highly prejudicial to royal authority; they weaken it by disgracing it."

Louis held all contradiction in the greatest horror; a few examples will prove the truth of what I advance. The king, in consequence of what he had heard from the Duc de Choiseul, had taken a profound hatred to the Jesuits; he determined to exile them. The king of Prussia (who eagerly embraced every opportunity of tormenting Louis XV), learning the circumstance, hastened to declare himself the protector of the Jesuits, to whom he offered an asylum in Silesia. This piece of malice made Louis almost frantic. Upon another occasion, the conversation happened to fall upon the correspondence of Frederic II with M. de Voltaire. The Prince de Poix took upon him to express his astonishment as to what they possibly could have to write about. "What should you suppose?" replied Louis, with impatience; "why, to talk scandal about me, and misinterpret my actions."

At the period of which I am speaking Diderot, then an obscure writer, and great pretender to philosophy, received from Catherine of Russia so pressing an invitation to visit St Petersburg that he resolved upon going thither. This piece of intelligence was soon spread throughout Versailles; and at a supper-party which took place in my apartments, the king having asked the guests what were the last news, the Marquis de Chauvelin replied that the subject of most general interest was the approaching departure of Diderot for Russia.

"And what is he going there for?" cried the king. "I should not have imagined him sufficiently rich to undertake such a journey."

"He does not undertake it at his own cost," replied the Prince de Soubise; "her imperial majesty pays all travelling expenses."

"What does her imperial majesty want with him?" asked Louis, with an air of dissatisfaction.

"To enjoy the charms of his conversation," was the answer.

"You did not inform me of this," observed the king, abruptly turning towards the Duc d'Aiguillon.

"Sire," replied the minister, "I saw nothing of a State affair in the transaction."

"I crave your pardon," replied Louis; "Diderot is the ambassador of the philosophical cabal, who have determined upon sending him to hold me up to derision and mockery in a strange land. He has never set foot in the Château, yet he will take upon himself to repeat a thousand falsehoods respecting my private life; and, in proportion as his calumnies are favourably received will he go on fabricating fresh slanders. Of a truth, the lot of a king need not be envied."

"If your majesty really apprehends any mischief from the impertinent gossip of Diderot," exclaimed the Duc de Duras, "it would perhaps be as well to forbid his leaving the kingdom."

"Yes," added *le petit saint*, "a *lettre de cachet;* that will be the thing to stop his prating. I will cause it to be prepared the moment I leave this table."

"Have a care," cried the king; "you will involve me in a never-ending quarrel with her imperial majesty. She wishes for Diderot, and I have no right to oppose his departure: there would be a fine confusion if I did. Every honour and praise would be ascribed to the Semiramis of the North, whilst poor I would be exposed to the pitiless storm of pamphlets, satires, lampoons, epigrams, etc. These foreign potentates are not particularly nice in their line of conduct towards me. Have I ever seduced away their men of genius? Why should they deprive me of those who ornament my reign? It has always been

a mania among my neighbours to take from France our most skilful artists and celebrated men of letters; they are welcome enough to the first, but for the latter——" Louis stopped for a few minutes, then resumed, "One thing is certain,—that so long as I live, this Diderot shall never be admitted into the academy; I will have no more atheists and philosophers; there are plenty already."

The day following this conversation Louis caused a letter to be written to M. Durand, our *chargé d'affaires* at Petersburg, desiring him to keep a watchful eye over the words and actions of the encyclopædist.

His majesty was much amused at the importance attached by the Ducs de Richelieu and d'Aumont to the management of the theatres; and frequently, by way of badinage, he would affect to bestow his patronage upon some player who happened to be out of their favour. But the most indefatigable patron of theatres was the Bishop of Orleans, M. de Jarente, who even whilst holding the administration of church benefices, was for ever occupied with the concerns of the male performers, and in providing for the comfort and well-being of the female part of the *corps dramatique*. One day, as the Duc d'Aumont was obtaining the royal signature to some paper relative to the Comédie Italienne, his majesty observed:

"Duc d'Aumont, this must be a point of some nicety between you and your conscience; for, remember, you are infringing upon the territories of M. d'Orleans."

"Ah, sire," replied the duke, "I would give him a handsome sum to exchange his post for mine."

"I am perfectly sure he will agree to the bargain," returned Louis, "if the actresses are comprised in it."

Speaking of theatrical subjects leads me to mention a man who is now undisputed master of the boards. Caron de Beaumarchais acquired, by a trifling lawsuit, a sur-

prising reputation. *M. de* Beaumarchais (for the gentleman resents any familiar attempt to address him as Caron de Beaumarchais) is a man who cannot exist without bustle and confusion; to condemn him to a life of repose would be a far more cruel sentence than to sentence him to death. 'Tis not glory he is ambitious of, but noise: so that could he but succeed in making himself the object of general conversation he cared very little whether good or ill were spoken of him. For this individual the hundred trumpets with which Fame is invested were too few to blazon his name abroad. He possesses sense; and, what is very seldom found in company with wit, great skill in the management and application of it. He is clever in all schemes of commercial speculation, and studies diplomacy with a view to promote the success of his commercial enterprises, and he turns his literary reputation to the profit of pecuniary undertakings. What shall I say further of him? He is particularly clever and eloquent in his descriptions, strong and forcible in argument, but a jester and a liar. Woe to his adversary; he would cast him into the mud even at the risk of himself sharing in the fall.

I have been led on to sketch this hasty portrait of Beaumarchais by the recollection of the first appearance of his memoirs. The gazetteer Marin, who was paid for keeping a watchful eye over men of letters, came to me in a great rage, to demand vengeance on Beaumarchais, who, in his memoirs, had treated him with great severity. Comte Jean, who was with me, took up the matter, exclaiming:

"Who the devil advised you, Marin, to thrust your nose where you are not wanted? Your business is to espy the proceedings of men of letters, and not to take upon yourself to quarrel and fight with every clever man who has a slap at you. Beaumarchais, you say, has

handled you roughly; so much the worse for you. You are well paid; be wise and hold your tongue."

"But, my lord, my honour——"

"Oh, for mercy's sake, my good friend, never make yourself uneasy about so mere a trifle."

Saying which, my brother-in-law gently took *le Marin* by the shoulders, and, in a friendly manner, put him out of the room.

This Marin, a Provençal by birth, in his childhood one of the choristers, and afterwards organist of the village church, was, at the period of which I am speaking, one of the most useful men possible. Nominated by M. de Saint Florentin to the post of censor-royal, this friend to the philosophers was remarkable for the peculiar talent with which he would alternately applaud and condemn the writings of these gentlemen. Affixing his sanction to two lines in a tragedy by Dorat had cost him twenty-four hours' meditation within the walls of the Bastille; and for permitting the representation of some opera (the name of which I forget) he had been deprived of a pension of 2000 francs; but, wedded to the delights of his snug post, Marin always contrived, after every storm, to find his way back to its safe harbour. He had registered a vow never to resign the office of censor, but to keep it in despite of danger and difficulty. I soon discovered that he joined to his avocations of censor and gazetteer that of purveyor to his majesty's *petits amours*.

Spite of my indefatigable endeavours to render Louis happy and satisfied with the pleasures of his own home, he would take occasional wandering fits, and go upon the ramble, sometimes in pursuit of a high-born dame, at others eager to obtain a poor and simple grisette; and so long as the object of his fancy were but new to him, it mattered little what were her claims to youth, beauty, or rank in life. The Maréchale de Mirepoix frequently said

to me, " Do you know, my dear creature, that your royal admirer is but a very fickle swain, who is playing the gay gallant when he ought to be quietly seated at his own fireside. Have a care, he is growing old, and his intellect becomes more feeble each day ; and what he would never have granted some few years back, may be easily wrung from him now. Chamilly aspires at governing his master, and Marin seconds him in his project."

At length, roused to a sense of impending evil by the constant hints of the maréchale, I summoned Marin to my presence. " Now, sir," said I, as he approached. " I would have you to know that I am apprised of all your tricks ; you and your friend Chamilly are engaged in a very clever scheme to improve your own fortunes at the expense of the king your master."

Marin burst into loud protestations of his innocence, declaring that he was as innocent as the lamb just born. I refused to believe this, and desired he would explain to me why he went so frequently to the apartments of M. Chamilly.

" Alas, madam ! " replied Marin, " I go thither but to solicit his aid in craving the bounty of his majesty."

" You are for ever pleading poverty, miserly being," cried I ; " you are far richer than I am ; but since you want money I will supply you with it, and in return you shall be my secret newsman, and royal censor in my service. Now, understand me clearly ; every month that you faithfully bring me an account of certain goings on, I will count into your hand five-and-twenty louis d'or."

I must confess that Marin only accepted my proposition with much reluctance, but still he did accept it, and withdrew, meditating, no doubt, how he should be enabled to satisfy both Chamilly and myself.

A long time elapsed before Marin brought me any news of importance, and I began to feel considerable

doubts of his fidelity, when he came to communicate a very important piece of intelligence. He had just learned that Chamilly frequently went to Paris, the bearer of letters from the king to a young and pretty female named Madame de Rumas, who resided in the old Rue du Temple.

Here was a pretty discovery ; the king actually engaged in a love affair, letters passing between him and his mistress, whilst the head valet de chambre was acting the part of Mercury to the lovers. This indeed required some speedy remedy, and I lost no time in summoning my privy counsellor, Comte Jean, whom I acquainted with what had occurred, and begged his advice as to the best measures to be pursued.

Comte Jean departed to seek the assistance of M. de Sartines, who was at that time entirely devoted to my interests ; and, after having diligently searched the whole Rue du Temple, he succeeded in discovering Madame de Rumas. He learned that this lady had recently married a person of her own rank, to whom she professed to be violently attached ; that they lived together with great tranquillity, and had the reputation of conducting themselves as persons of extreme propriety and regularity ; paid their debts, and avoided by their air of neatness, order, and modest reserve, the scandal of even their most ill-natured neighbours. The husband was said to be a great religionist, which increased the suspicions of Comte Jean. With regard to the correspondence carried on by the lady, no information could be gleaned in that quarter.

Marin was again sent for by my brother-in-law, who questioned and cross-questioned with so much address, that he found it impossible to conceal any longer the remaining part of the affair, of which he had before communicated but so much as his policy deemed advisable. He confessed that he had originally mentioned Madame de Rumas (whom he himself had long known) to Chamilly,

had shown him several of her letters ; and, as he expected, the style of these epistles so pleased the head valet that he expressed a wish to see the fair writer. Marin accordingly introduced him to the Rue du Temple, where he was most graciously received, and returned home enchanted with the lady ; he spoke of her to the king, strongly recommending his majesty to judge for himself. Accordingly his majesty wrote to Madame de Rumas, who received the letter from the hands of her friend Chamilly with all pomp and state, talked first of her own virtue and honour, and afterwards of her dutiful respect for his majesty.

An interview was next solicited and granted ; for a visit was such a trifle to refuse. The royal guest became pressing and the lady more reserved, till the time was lost in attempts at convincing each other. At the next interview Madame de Rumas freely confessed her sincere attachment for his majesty, but added that such was her desire to possess his whole and undivided regard that she could never give herself up to the hope of keeping him exclusively hers whilst I interposed between her and the king's heart — in a few words, then, she demanded my dismissal. This was going too far ; and Louis, who thought it no scandal to have a hundred mistresses, was alarmed at the thoughts of occasioning the bustle and confusion attendant upon disgracing his acknowledged favourite and recognised mistress ; he therefore assured her the request was beyond his power to grant.

Madame de Rumas now sought to compromise the affair, by talking of a share in his favour. She asked, she said, but the heart of her beloved monarch, and would freely leave me in possession of all power and influence. The king, whose heart was regularly promised once a day, did not hesitate to assure her of his fidelity, and his

wily enslaver flattered herself that with time and clever management she would succeed in inducing him to break off those ties which he now refused to sever.

Things were in this state when Marin divulged to us the intrigue conducted by Chamilly, and directed, though in a covert manner, by the Maréchal Duc de Richelieu. This spiteful old man possessed no share of the talent of his family; and, not contented with the favour bestowed on his nephew, thought only of his personal credit and influence, which he fancied he should best secure by introducing a new mistress to the king. This well-concocted scheme threw both Comte Jean and myself into a perfect fury. We dismissed Marin with a present of fifty louis, and my brother-in-law besought of me to grant him four-and-twenty hours undisturbed reflection, whilst, on my side, I assured him I should not rest until we had completely discomfited our enemies.

On the following day Comte Jean laid before me several projects, which were far from pleasing in my eyes; too much time was required in their execution. I knew the king too well to be blind to the danger of allowing this mere whim of the moment to take root in his mind. One idea caught my fancy, and without mentioning it to Comte Jean, I determined upon carrying it into execution.

The Maréchale de Mirepoix happened at this moment not to be at Paris at her Hotel de la Rue Bergère, but at her country house, situated at Port à l'Anglaise. I signified to the king my intention of passing a couple of days with the Maréchale, and accordingly set out for that purpose. Upon my arrival at Paris I merely changed horses, and proceeded onwards with all possible despatch to rejoin the Maréchale, who was quite taken by surprise

at my unexpected arrival. After many mutual embraces and exchange of civilities, I explained to her the whole affair which had brought me from Versailles. Self-interest bound her to my service, and accordingly she wrote to M. de Rumas a very pressing letter, requesting to see him on the following day upon matters of the highest importance. This letter sent off, I dined with the Maréchale, and then returned to sleep at Paris.

On the following day, at an early hour, I repaired to the Port à l'Anglaise; M. de Rumas arrived there a few minutes after myself. He had the air and look of an honest man, but perhaps no species of deceit is more easily detected than that quiet, subdued manner, compressed lips and uplifted eye. Nowadays such a mode of dissembling would be too flimsy to impose even on children; besides hypocrites are ever greater proficients in their art than was even M. de Rumas.

Madame de Mirepoix left us alone together, in order that I might converse more freely with him. I knew not how to begin, but made many attempts to convey, in an indirect manner, the reasons for his being summoned to that day's conference. However, hints and insinuations were alike thrown away upon one who had determined neither to use eyes nor ears but as interest pointed out the reasonableness of so doing; and accordingly, unable longer to repress my impatience, I exclaimed abruptly:

"Pray, sir, do you know who I am?"

"Yes, madam," replied he, with a profound bow, "you are the Comtesse du Barri."

"Well, sir," added I, "and you are equally well aware, no doubt, of the relation in which I stand to the king?"

"But, madam,——"

"Nay, sir, answer without hesitation; I wish you to

be candid, otherwise my exceeding frankness may displease you."

"I know, madam," replied the hypocrite, "that his majesty finds great pleasure in your charming society."

"And yet, sir," answered I, "his majesty experiences equal delight in the company of your wife. How answer you that, M. de Rumas?"

"My wife, madam!"

"Yes, sir, in the company of Madame de Rumas. He pays her many private visits, secretly corresponds with her——"

"The confidence of his majesty must ever honour his subjects."

"But," replied I, quickly, "may dishonour a husband."

"How, madam! what is it you would insinuate?"

"That your wife would fain supplant me, and that she is now the mistress of the king, although compelled to be such in secret."

"Impossible," exclaimed M. de Rumas, "and some enemy to my wife has thus aspersed her to you."

"And do you treat it as mere calumny?" said I. "No, sir, nothing can be more true; and if you would wish further confirmation, behold the letter which Madame de Rumas wrote to the king only the day before yesterday; take it and read it."

"Heaven preserve me, madam," exclaimed the time-serving wretch, "from presuming to cast my eyes over what is meant only for his majesty's gracious perusal; it would be an act of treason I am not capable of committing."

"Then, sir," returned I, "I may reasonably conclude that it is with your sanction and concurrence your wife intrigues with the king?"

"Ah, madam," answered the wily de Rumas, in a soft

and expostulating tone, "trouble not, I pray you, the repose of my family. I know too well the virtue of Madame de Rumas, her delicacy, and the severity of her principles; I know too well likewise the sentiments in which her excellent parents educated her, and I defy the blackest malice to injure her in my estimation."

"Wonderful, sir!" cried I; "so you determine to believe your wife's virtue incorruptible, all the while you are profiting by her intrigues. However, I am too certain of what I assert to look on with the culpable indifference you are pleased to assume, whilst your *virtuous* wife is seeking to supplant me at the Château; you shall hear of me before long. Adieu, sir."

So saying, I quitted the room in search of the Maréchale, to whom I related what had passed.

"And now, what think you of so base a hypocrite?" asked I, when I had finished my account.

"He well deserves having the mask torn from his face," replied she; "but give yourself no further concern; return home, and depend upon it, that, one way or other, I will force him into the path of honour."

This advice was far from satisfying me, and I determined upon striking a decisive blow. I sent for Chamilly, and, treating him with all the contempt he deserved, I told him, that if the king did not immediately give up this woman he might prepare for his own immediate dismissal. At first Chamilly sought to appease my anger by eager protestations of innocence, but when he found I already knew the whole affair, and was firmly fixed in my determination, he became alarmed, threw himself at my knees, and promised to do all I would have him. We then agreed to tell Louis some tale of Madame de Rumas that should effectually deter him from thinking further of her.

In pursuance with this resolution, Chamilly informed the king that he had just been informed that Madame de Rumas had a lover, who boasted of being able to turn his majesty which way he pleased, through the intervention of his mistress. Louis wrote off instantly to M. de Sartines to have a watchful eye over the proceedings of the Rumas family. The lieutenant of police, who had some regard for me, and a still greater portion of fear, was faithful to my interests, and rendered to Louis the most horrible particulars of the profligate mode of life pursued by Madame de Rumas; assuring him that from every consideration of personal safety, his majesty should shun the acquaintance. The king, incensed at the trick put upon him by these seemingly virtuous people, was at first for confining both husband and wife in prison, but this measure I opposed with all my power; for, satisfied with the victory I had gained, I cared for no further hurt to my adversaries. I contrived to insinuate to the worthy pair the propriety of their avoiding the impending storm by a timely retreat into the country, a hint they were wise enough to follow up, so that I was entirely freed from all further dread of their machinations.

All those who had served me in this affair I liberally rewarded: Marin received for his share 500 louis. It is true he lost the confidence of Chamilly, but he gained mine instead, so that it will easily be believed he was no sufferer by the exchange. I caused the Maréchale to receive from the king a superb Turkey carpet, to which I added a complete service of Sèvres porcelain, with a beautiful breakfast set, on which were landscapes most delicately and skilfully drawn in blue and gold. I gave her also two large blue porcelain cots, as finely executed as those you have so frequently admired in my small salon. These trifles cost me no less a sum than 2800 livres. I

did not forget my good friend M. de Sartines, who received a cane, headed with gold, around which was a small band of diamonds. As for Chamilly, I granted him his pardon; and I think you will admit that was being sufficiently generous.

CHAPTER X

STRANGE STORIES

At one time I had a quarrel with the Duc de Richelieu respecting Mademoiselle Guimard the actress, which I must not pass over in silence. The noble duke, although affecting a great friendship for the Prince de Soubise, could not, in reality, endure him. Ancient military disputes were raked up, and a continual jealousy was kept up by the fears of each proving a dangerous rival near the king. M. de Richelieu, by virtue of his office as first gentleman of the bed-chamber, had the entire superintendence of the Comédie Française, whose best performers were accustomed to take a part in the private theatricals conducted by Mademoiselle Guimard. Under pretext of the public good, the wily maréchal prohibited the French comedians from appearing elsewhere than on the boards of their own theatre.

The Prince de Soubise, perceiving the intention of this sudden regard for the interests of Paris, applied to the king to withdraw the offensive injunction. M. de Laborde, who was a great favourite of Louis XV, joined in the request ; I came in as a third suppliant in the cause of Mademoiselle Guimard, and victory decided in our favour. The duke was perfectly furious at his failure. Having accidentally encountered me at Fontainebleau, he spoke to me in a tone and manner which greatly annoyed me and excited all my anger ; I replied to him in an equally severe strain. Carried away by rage, the maréchal had no longer any command over himself ; and what further he might have said or done I know not, had

not the king, fortunately for us both, happened to pass within twenty steps from where we stood. The sight of his sovereign restored the duke to the possession of his senses; and, recognising the folly of his conduct, he hastily implored me, in a low voice, to pronounce his pardon. My only answer was to dart on him a look of the most perfect contempt, and to quit him.

Meanwhile I had not forgotten a promise I had formerly given of endeavouring to render Mademoiselle Guimard some essential service in a pecuniary way; nor did I consider myself at all released by the assistance I had lately afforded her in the matter of her theatrical dispute with the Duc de Richelieu. With the hope of attracting the king's attention towards her, I gave a little fête, of which the Duc de Duras undertook the management. It went off delightfully. First, several pieces were played from *Pandora*, an opera the words of which were written by Voltaire; afterwards, some clever proverbs were acted, and the whole finished by a ballet, in which Mademoiselle Guimard took a part. As I expected, his majesty was charmed with the exceeding grace and elegance of her dancing, which he extolled in the warmest terms. I took the opportunity, when his enthusiasm was at its height, to insinuate a few regrets that so talented an actress should be so unfortunately crippled in her purse, and consequently exposed to so many embarrassments.

"Indeed!" said Louis, when I had ceased speaking, "and so poor Mademoiselle de Guimard is in difficulties? I am very sorry for her; but, I dare say, neither the Prince de Soubise nor M. de Laborde will suffer her to want for anything."

"Ah, sire!" rejoined I, "they are far from acting liberally towards her; and really she has such a beautiful house, and does the honours of it so elegantly, that she is well deserving the munificence of your majesty."

"Well, well," replied the king, "I will think about it."

I lost no time in apprising Mademoiselle Guimard that his majesty had promised to bear her in mind, upon which she immediately began to contract fresh debts; trusting, from what I mentioned to her, that her old ones would be all settled by the royal bounty.

Three or four days after this Louis put into my hand a paper, saying, with a smile, "You see I have not forgotten your protégée." It contained a deed of settlement upon Mademoiselle Guimard of an annuity of 1500 livres! Such generosity perfectly overwhelmed me. The idea of 1500 livres to a woman who owed nearly a million! I really could not recover myself. Nevertheless, I endeavoured to dissimulate my ill-humour and dissatisfaction, for the good king would never have been able to enter into my views and ideas on the subject. For my own part, as I would not offend Mademoiselle Guimard by offering her so paltry a sum, I added to it from myself a pearl necklace, worth 10,000 livres, and a similar sum in money. When the whole reached her, and she saw the narrow limits set by Louis to his munificence, she could not conceal her disappointment; and the king's splendid present formed, for many days, the favourite topic of conversation.

After my reconciliation with Mademoiselle Guimard (for, in fact, I seem determined to confuse periods), that is to say, before the long story I have just been relating, I was concerned in an affair of much greater importance, in which his majesty displayed a far more princely generosity—I allude to the marriage of my nephew, Vicomte Adolphe du Barri. Comte Jean was very anxious to see this young man eligibly settled, as he had already suffered considerable annoyance and vexation from his rash and thoughtless conduct. My brother-in-law reaped, in the extravagant conduct of his son, the

harvest he had himself sown. The young viscount possessed many excellent qualities; but, imprudent and dissipated, he had already injured his health, and nearly destroyed his reputation likewise: his entire destruction must infallibly ensue if he were not stopped in his wild career. Marriage alone seemed to promise a happy termination to his folly and our inquietudes, and we eagerly availed ourselves of the only chance left to us.

Suitable alliances were easily formed: in fact, so many proposals had been made from families of the highest rank and power, that our only difficulty seemed likely to be, which we would select. In the midst of our deliberations Comte Jean said to me:

"Sister, you will scarcely guess what I am disposed to attempt."

"Some grand project," answered I, laughing.

"You are right," replied Comte Jean. "No less a scheme than to ally Adolphe with the royal family."

"Moderate, indeed!" cried I. "And which of the princesses do you design the honour of demanding in marriage. Will you accept Madame Clotilde, or deign to prefer Madame Elizabeth?"

"Neither the one nor the other; but do, I pray of you, be serious for one minute, and you shall hear. Old Yon has brought up a daughter of his majesty, called Mademoiselle de Saint André. She is now at the convent of the Presentation. She would, you must allow, be a very suitable match for my son; so only use your interest with the royal papa, and the thing is settled."

It appeared to me a much more reasonable thing to demand for my nephew the hand of a spurious branch of royalty than to aspire to one of the daughters of France, and I lost no time in speaking of it to his majesty. Louis troubled himself very little with his illegitimate offspring,

whom he never saw, and rarely inquired after, leaving them to live or die in peace. These children, whether male or female, had a fixed sum of about 500,000 livres settled on them at their birth, the interest of which was allowed to accumulate until they came of age, by which means the capital was necessarily doubled. Should any out of the number happen to die, his or her portion was divided among the survivors, but in very unequal proportions, by far the larger part going to the sons. The daughters nearly always espoused men of quality, and their mothers were generally married off to bankers, merchants, and the like.

When first I applied to the king for the hand of Mademoiselle Saint André I had to explain to him which of his progeny I alluded to; for, as he had no less than eighty of these natural descendants, he was apt to confuse himself in the recollection of them. All at once a light broke in upon him, and he comprehended wonderfully well the individual I was desirous of securing for the Vicomte Adolphe; but all my endeavours could not elicit from him a decided answer one way or the other. He took it into his head to affect the anxious parent—a character he would sometimes, when the fit was on him, assume. He began to express his doubts of the happiness of his beloved daughter were she married to my nephew; and he very gravely asked me, with the most paternal air, if I believed that the young Vicomte du Barri would make her a kind and tender husband? I promised everything for my nephew; explained to Louis how gratifying the alliance would be to me; and, in a word, after some demurring on his side, obtained his consent. That agreed upon, the king, who was a most orderly man, began to examine his papers. "I see," said he," "that it is a person named Yon who has the guardianship of my daughter; let him be desired to come to me immediately,

that I may have some conversation with him concerning this marriage."

In pursuance of the king's desire, Comte Jean went in search of Yon. Yon was a grave, formal, and affected personage, who, proud of filling the place of father to a daughter of the king, treated all matters relative to his ward with the most solemn gravity. However, Comte Jean, who never anticipated the possibility of a mischance under any circumstances, and still less in the present, went with the most perfect assurance of success to seek out M. Yon, to whom he communicated his project, pointing out at the same time all the advantages which should accrue to him as the lady's guardian. The crafty old man assured him of his entire devotion to his wishes, and immediately repaired, according to the king's orders, to Versailles.

It fell to the lot of Chamilly to introduce the important Yon to the king; and, by virtue of his office, he remained in the apartment and became a witness to the conversation which ensued; a conversation which he lost not a moment in carrying to my brother-in-law. It commenced with Louis explaining his intentions respecting his daughter to M. Yon. The latter then replied:

"Sire, it grieves me beyond measure to oppose your majesty's wishes, but I am bound to declare that the marriage is impossible."

"And why so, may I ask, my good Yon?" said Louis.

"Because one so nearly related to your majesty as is my amiable ward, should not be exposed to any reverses of fortune. The husband you propose for your daughter holds but a precarious existence at Court, of which he may be deprived at any minute. No, sire! if you will reflect, you will see the impossibility of the Vicomte du Barri espousing Mademoiselle de Saint André. You certainly are sole arbiter of your daughter's fate, but I,

who have the exceeding honour to be your representative with the young lady, cannot betray her interests so far as to give my countenance and consent to this marriage. Permit me, Sire, to withdraw from the affair altogether, and let not my name appear upon any of the deeds which may be drawn up."

The king was silent, and Yon, encouraged by this tacit approbation of his opinion, continued to keep up a hot fire against our party, and to attack us in every possible way. He next advanced the fact of the Marquis de la Tour du Pin la Choise having applied to him for his interest with Mademoiselle de Saint André. The king, who, fearing my influence, was anxious to bring the affair to a termination, availed himself of this concluding argument to settle the matter, by saying :

" You are perfectly right. I had quite forgotten M. de la Tour du Pin, to whom I had, in fact, promised the hand of my daughter, and I thank you for recalling him to my recollection before I had unintentionally broken my faith with him ; I therefore haste to atone for my fault by commissioning you to call on him in my name, and acquaint him that I accept him as the husband of the young person in question."

Yon, whose heart was entirely devoted to the Choiseuls, lost no time in executing those measures, which must necessarily deprive my nephew of all hope of success. The good creature Chamilly, who, on the other hand, was in my interests, ran to apprise me of all that had passed, and I confess that it occasioned me great annoyance and dissatisfaction. Again I urged the matter on the king ; but in spite of my reiterated importunities, I could not move him from his last determination. He pleaded a prior engagement formed with the Marquis de la Tour du Pin la Choise, which had for a time escaped his recollection, and afterwards excused himself upon the

grounds of the very dissipated conduct of my nephew. I was therefore compelled to give up all thoughts of this marriage, and look about for some other equally eligible.

Meanwhile, the Prince de Soubise, learning the vast pains and trouble I was taking to procure a suitable establishment for my nephew, came to me one morning, and proposed to me a relation of his own, Mademoiselle de Tournon. This Mademoiselle de Tournon was at once the most beautiful and nobly-born lady in the kingdom, but, at the same time, one of the very poorest of our nobility. She was allied to nearly all the Court, and would be of incalculable advantage to her husband, as far as introducing him to the first society in the nation went. We were perfectly dazzled with the splendid prospect held out by this match; Comte Jean particularly was charmed with it. The want of fortune we neither of us looked upon as any obstacle; that was a deficiency we knew very well how to get over. The only difficulty which seemed likely to arise was from her relations, of whom she had some very illustrious, for instance, the Prince de Condé, son-in-law to the Prince de Soubise, was one.

This prince had been a great plague to us, and had cost us no inconsiderable sum to bring back to the Court party. I knew him well enough to be certain that if he agreed to serve us in the matrimonial project we had in view, he would expect to be well rewarded for his conduct. I therefore commissioned the Maréchale de Mirepoix to confer with him on the subject at the house of the Princesse de Monaco.

When Madame de Mirepoix came to report to me the results of her embassy, I heard that the prince demanded, as the price of his consent, the liquidation of his debts, to the sum of 1,500,000 livres; the purchase price of his

palace in Paris; and admission into the council as a minister of State!

These demands appeared to me exorbitant, and greatly alarmed me; nevertheless, it was necessary for me to speak to the king respecting it. I set about this difficult business with all the tact I could command.

"Sire," said I, "you have refused us the opportunity of forming one good alliance for my nephew, we have now another proposed for him; not equal to the other, certainly, but proceeding from a highly respectable and well-connected family."

"And who is the lady?" inquired Louis.

"Mademoiselle de Tournon."

"Indeed!" replied the king; "a most excellent match indeed. And what says the Prince de Condé to this alliance?"

"He says 'No,' just at present," returned I; "but he will change his tone directly he can obtain from your majesty certain favours he is desirous of asking of you."

"What are they?" cried Louis. "Some folly or other, I make no doubt."

"Rather say extravagances, sire," answered I. "His demands are as unreasonable as they are boundless: he asks for both heaven and earth."

"Poor viscount!" ejaculated the king; "he is certainly very unfortunate; but tell me what is it the prince *does* ask?"

"Perfect extravagances I tell you, sire."

"But of what nature? What is it he requires?"

"In the first place, 1,500,000 livres to silence his most noisy and clamorous creditors; secondly, that you shall purchase his hotel of him; and, thirdly and lastly, that you shall grant him admission to the council with the title of minister."

"Bless me," cried Louis, sighing, "how you frighten

me! Really these conditions are enormous and unreasonable, but still not so bad as I expected, my dear countess; you exaggerated the matter prodigiously."

I was delighted with this speech; and, after assuring the king of the pleasure it gave me to find he was not more displeased and surprised at the excessive price at which the Prince de Condé valued his consent, he added, "I am resolved to please you, and to do all in my power to procure an honourable alliance for your nephew; I therefore grant the sum demanded, and will purchase the Hôtel de Condé to build an additional wing to the Comédie Française. As for the admittance into council, it may be a point of sôme difficulty; but should the prince not obtain his wish immediately, he may depend upon my promise that he shall be gratified in that likewise, sooner or later."

Louis had his own reasons for replying thus to me; for he judged, and with reason, that his ministers would look with mistrust and dislike upon the entry of the Prince de Condé to the ministry. His spirit of arbitrary domination was too well known not to be dreaded; the pacific monarch trembled at the bare idea of kindling an intestine war among his ministers, nor could any consideration have prevailed upon him to provoke one.

The good-natured Maréchale de Mirepoix again set to work. She hastened to his most serene highness, and related to him what the king had engaged to do. The Prince de Condé raved and fumed, declared that he despised pecuniary advantages, and sought honour, honour alone! In fact, he behaved most amusingly upon the occasion. The maréchale was not dismayed; and, to serve me, she determined to fight for me by hinting at the possibility of my own downfall.

"But, indeed, your highness seems determined to stand in the way of your own interest," urged the maré-

chale ; " you have not reflected upon half the advantages which may result to you from this marriage. Mademoiselle de Tournon is seventeen years of age, transcendently beautiful, highly born, well educated, clever, witty, and virtuous. She will be admitted into the intimate society of Madame du Barri, where she will have daily opportunities of seeing and being seen by the king. Who knows what may happen ? She may please him, and so, in progress of time, eclipse her aunt. Think of all you would gain were she to become the king's mistress ! "

" Well," exclaimed the prince, " then I consent to the projected marriage, but on one fresh condition— that 100,000 crowns shall be divided between you and the Princesse de Monaco ! "

The maréchale came to inform me of the termination of this great affair ; her modesty and moderation would not permit her to tell me the last clause in the treaty. The Prince de Condé, however, took care I should not remain ignorant of it, but sent the Prince de Soubise to speak to me of it ; I referred him to the comptroller-general, and everything was settled in the happiest manner possible. His serene highness received the 1,500,000 livres and the price of his hotel, and the two ladies shared the 300,000 livres between them. Over and above all this, Madame de Monaco claimed the 50,000 livres which the maréchale had promised her in my name, and she further received a superb wedding present. I have already observed, and I cannot too often repeat it, that at Court all difficulties are to be got over by the aid of money.

The marriage was celebrated at St Roch with the utmost splendour and magnificence. The king spared no expense, and caused the nuptial feast to be prepared with a most uncommon disregard of money and a truly princely grandeur.

One day, at an hour at which I was not accustomed to see any person, a lady called and requested to see me; she was informed that I was visible to no person. Two hours afterwards a note, bearing no signature, was brought to me, in which I was informed that the lady had presented herself to communicate things which concerned not only my own personal safety but the welfare of all France; a frightful catastrophe was impending, which there was still time to prevent; the means of so doing were offered me, and I was conjured not to reject them. The affair, if treated with indifference, would bring on incalculable misfortunes and horrors, to which I should be the first victim. All this apparent mystery would be cleared up, and the whole affair explained, if I would repair on the following day, at one o'clock, to the Baths of Apollo. A grove of trees there was pointed out as a safe place of rendezvous, and being so very near my residence, calculated to remove any fears I might entertain of meeting a stranger, who, as the note informed me, possessed the means of entering this secluded spot. I was again conjured to be punctual to the appointed hour as I valued my life.

The mysterious and solemn tone of this singular epistle struck me with terror. Madame de Mirepoix was with me at the moment I received it. I handed her the letter. When she had perused it, she said:

"Upon my word, if I were in your place, I would clear up this mystery. Good advice is not so easily met with as to make it a matter of difficulty to go as far as the Baths of Apollo to seek it. It is by no means impossible but that, as this paper tells you, some great peril is hanging over you."

I had a key which opened all the park gates; we entered the park, took the path which turns off to the left, and after having walked for about five minutes, found ourselves opposite the person we were in search of.

It was a female of from thirty to forty years of age, of diminutive stature, dressed after the fashion of the day, but with an air of good taste evident through the simplicity of her attire. Her countenance must once have been handsome, if one might judge by the beauty of her eyes and mouth, but she was pale, withered, and already impressed with the traces of a premature old age. But her beauties, although faded, were still animated by a quick and ever-varying expression of a keen and lively wit.

Whilst I made these hasty remarks the stranger saluted me, and afterwards the Maréchale de Mirepoix, with an ease of manner which perfectly surprised me.

"Madam," she said, addressing herself to me, "I trust you will pardon me for having given you the trouble of coming hither; I might have spared it you, had your people permitted me to see you when I called at your house yesterday, but what I have to say must be told to yourself alone."

"Well, then," said the maréchale, "I will leave you for the present; I am going to admire that fine group of Girardon;" and so saying, she quitted the walk in which I was standing.

Directly she was gone the stranger said to me, "Madam, I will explain myself without reserve or unnecessary prolixity; I beseech of you to listen attentively whilst I tell you, in the first place, that both your life and that of the king is in imminent danger."

These words, pronounced in a low, solemn voice, froze me with terror; my limbs tottered under me, and I almost sunk on the ground. The stranger assisted me to a bench, offered me her arm, and when she saw me a little recovered, she continued:

"Yes, madam, a conspiracy is afoot against yourself and Louis XV. You are to be made away with out of revenge,

and the king is to suffer, in the hopes of his death effecting a change in the present face of affairs."

"And who," inquired I, "are the conspirators?"

"The Jesuits and Parliamentarians; these ancient rivals, equally persecuted by the royal Government, have determined to make common cause against their mutual foe. The Jesuits flatter themselves that the dauphin inherits the kind feelings entertained by his father for their order, and the Parliamentarians justly reckon upon the friendly disposition of the young prince towards the old magistracy. Both parties equally flatter themselves that a fresh reign would bring about their re-establishment, and they are impatient to accelerate so desirable an event: the conspiracy is directed by four Jesuits and the same number of the ex-members of the parliament of Paris. The remainder of the two corporations are not initiated in the secret of the enterprise. I am not able at present to give you the names of the eight conspirators, the person from whom I derive my information not having as yet confided them even to myself, but I trust ere long to obtain such a mark of confidence."

The female ceased speaking, and I remained in a state of doubt, fear, and alarm, impossible to describe.

"I perceive that my recital appears to you improbable; one particular which I will state may perhaps overcome your incredulity. Are you not in the habit, madam, of taking every evening eau sucrée mixed with a large proportion of orange-flower water?"

"I am so," replied I.

"This day," continued my informant, "you will receive four bottles of orange-flower water contained in a box, bearing the usual appearances of having come from your perfumer's; but it is sent by other hands, and the liquor contained in the flasks is mingled with a deadly poison. The man who was my informant is aware of the

names of those concerned in the conspiracy, but he has charged me not to state who he is but upon certain conditions; a recommendation I shall most certainly attend to."

"Be assured," interrupted I, "that your demands shall be acceded to; you shall yourself fix the price of your entire disclosure of every fact connected with the business."

"It will not be an exorbitant one," replied the lady; "merely 2000 crowns, to be equally divided between the friend you desire to know and myself; for this sum, which is not a very large one, you may command the services of both of us. One word more, madam, and I am gone. Observe a strict silence upon all I have told you; or, if you must have a counsellor in such perilous circumstances, confide merely in some tried friend, say the Duc d'Aiguillon or the chancellor, or both, should you deem it necessary. I will see you at your own apartments the day after to-morrow, when I trust you will have ready 100,000 francs, on account of the amount I have stipulated for."

So saying, she curtsied and left me, overcome with surprise. I had had sufficient proofs since my elevation of the deadly hatred borne me by those whom my good fortune had rendered my enemies: yet, hitherto, my strongest apprehensions had never been directed to anything more terrible than being supplanted in the favour of the king, or being confined in my château. The horrible ideas of murder, poison, or assassination by any means, had never presented themselves to me. I timidly glanced around as I caught the sound of a slight rustle among the branches, but the figure which met my eye was that of Madame de Mirepoix, who, tired of waiting, had come to rejoin me.

"What!" said she, "are you alone? I did not observe your visitor leave you. Did she vanish into air?"

"Very possibly," answered I.

As we walked towards the château, I explained to my companion the joint conspiracy of the Jesuits and ancient members of Parliament against the king's life and my own. When I had ceased speaking, she replied, "All this is very possible; despair may conduct the Jesuits and Parliamentarians to the greatest extremities; but still this mysterious female may be nothing more than an impostor. At any rate, I am anxious to learn whether the box she described has been left at your house; if so, it will be a strong corroboration, if not a convincing proof of the falsehood of what she asserts."

We had by this time reached the bottom of the staircase which conducted to my apartments; we ascended the stairs rapidly, and the first person I met in the anteroom was Henriette.

"Henriette," said I, "has anything been brought for me during my absence?"

"Nothing, except a box of orange-flower water from Michel, the perfumer's, which I presume you ordered, Madam."

A glance of mutual surprise and consternation passed between the maréchale and myself. We entered my chamber, where Madame de Mirepoix opened the fatal box; it contained the four bottles, exactly as had been described. We regarded each other in profound silence, not daring to communicate our reflections. However, it was requisite to take some steps, and, catching up a pen, I hastily wrote a billet to the Duc d'Aiguillon, asking him to come at once, which he did.

The duke listened with extreme attention to the recital of my interview in the grove surrounding the Baths of Apollo. I endeavoured to relate the conversation as minutely and accurately as possible, but still the duke sought further particulars. He inquired the style of countenance, dress, manner and tone of voice possessed

by the incognita. One might have supposed, by the closeness of his questions, that he already fancied he had identified this mysterious personage. He then examined the box, which stood on the table, and remarked, " This is a very serious affair, nor can I undertake the management of it alone ; it involves a too great responsibility. I will have a conference with M. de Saint Florentin and the chancellor, in whose presence I will send for the lieutenant of police ; and the contents of these bottles shall be immediately analysed."

The duke wrote immediately to his two colleagues as well as to M. de Sartines, requesting this latter to repair to my apartment without delay. One of the ministers summoned by M. d'Aiguillon was not at that moment at Versailles, having left at an early hour in the morning for Paris. Neither he nor M. de Sartines could possibly be with us before eight o'clock in the evening ; it was therefore agreed to adjourn our conference till their arrival. During this time the liquid contained in the four bottles was being analysed : M. Quesnay, first physician, Messrs Thiébault and Varennes, visiting physicians, M. de la Martinière, counsellor of State, surgeon to his majesty, as well as Messrs Ducor and Prost, apothecaries to his majesty, had been collected together for this purpose by the Duc d'Aiguillon.

These gentlemen came to report the termination of their experiments at the very moment when the chancellor and lieutenant of police entered the room ; the Duc de la Vrillière had preceded them by about five minutes. The Duc d'Aiguillon requested these gentlemen to be seated. Doctors Quesnay and la Martinière were introduced, and desired to make known the result of their operations. My newly-arrived guests, who as yet understood nothing of what was going on, were struck with astonishment at hearing it said that the four bottles of orange-flower

water contained a considerable proportion of a most active poison, of which a very few drops would be sufficient to cause instantaneous death. Having thus executed their commission, the medical gentlemen bowed and retired.

M. d'Aiguillon then explained to my wondering friends the horrible affair which had occasioned their being sent for so hastily. I cannot tell you what effect this disclosure produced on M. de la Vrillière or M. de Maupeou, my whole attention being fixed upon M. de Sartines. Naturally, a lieutenant of police, particularly one who piqued himself upon knowing everything, could not feel very much at his ease when each word that was uttered convicted him either of incapacity or negligence. His brow became contracted, he hemmed, choked, fidgeted about, and appeared as though he would have given everything in the world for liberty to justify himself, but etiquette forbade it, and he was only permitted to speak after the secretaries of State then present, or if called upon by either of them.

When M. d'Aiguillon had ceased speaking, the chancellor in his turn took up the conversation. M. de Maupeou was by nature cold and sarcastic, delighting in annoying any person; but, on the present occasion, the ill-nature inherent in him was still excited by the decided hatred he bore to the unfortunate M. de Sartines. He began by saying that the conspiracy was evident, and was easily explained by the state of exasperation in which the Jesuits and Parliamentarians now were; both orders looking for no other prospect of amendment in their condition than such as might arise from some sudden convulsion of the kingdom. He expressed his opinion of the necessity of instituting a rigorous inquiry into the conduct of these two bodies; and then, turning to M. de Sartines, whose cheek grew pale at the movement, he charged him to lay

before the council all those particulars which he must necessarily possess as head of the police, either respecting the present plot, or relating to any of the ancient members of Parliament or the order of Jesuits.

This was a dagger to the heart of M. de Sartines, who in vain sought to frame a suitable reply: but what could he say? He did not in reality possess any of the information for which he had received credit, and after many awkward endeavours at explaining himself, he was compelled frankly to confess that he knew not a word more of the conspiracy than he had just then heard.

It was now the turn of M. de la Vrillière to speak. He also would fain have attacked the unfortunate lieutenant of police; but, whether M. de Maupeou thought that his own correction had been sufficiently strong, or whether he begrudged any other person interfering with his vengeance upon his personal foe, he abruptly interrupted the tirade of M. de la Vrillière by observing that a conspiracy conducted by only eight persons might very possibly escape the eye of the police; but, furnished as it now was with so many circumstances and particulars, it was impossible that the plot should any longer defy their vigilant researches.

M. d'Aiguillon fully concurred in this observation, and M. de Sartines, recovered in some measure from his first alarm, promised everything they could desire; and it was finally arranged that the police should that night use every precautionary measure in Paris, and that the officers of the guard should receive orders to redouble their zeal and activity in watching the Château; and that when the unknown female called again on me, she should be conducted by Madame de Mirepoix to the Duc d'Aiguillon, who would interrogate her closely.

These measures decided on, the council broke up, and I went to receive the king, who was this evening

to do me the favour of taking his supper in my apartments.

M. de Sartines did not sleep on his post, but his researches were fruitless; and, on the following day, three successive messengers came to announce to us that they had as yet made no discovery. At length arrived the period fixed for the visit of the incognita. I awaited the coming of this female with an impatience impossible to describe. About midday a note was brought me, giving me the names of four Jesuits at the head of the plot. She herself promised to come and see me later.

I immediately communicated this letter to the Duc d'Aiguillon, who convoked a fresh meeting of the persons who had been present on the preceding day. It was at first deliberated whether or not to arrest the whole body of Jesuits then in Paris, but this, although the advice of M. d'Aiguillon, was by no means approved of by the chancellor. M. de Sartines and M. de la Vrillière were for carrying the idea into execution, but the objections of M. de Maupeou were too powerful to be overruled, and the scheme was for the present abandoned.

All the delays greatly irritated me, and rendered my impatience to witness the termination of the affair greater than it had ever been. The stranger had promised to make her appearance on the following day; it passed away, however, without my hearing anything of her. On the day following she came. I immediately sent to apprise M. d'Aiguillon, who, with M. de la Vrillière and the chancellor, entered my apartment ere the lady had had time to commence the subject upon which she was there to speak. This unexpected appearance did not seem to disconcert her in the least, nor did her sang-froid and ordinary assurance in any degree fail her. She reproached me for having entrusted the secret to so many persons, but her reproof was uttered without bitterness, and merely

as if she feared lest my indiscretion might compromise our safety.

She was overwhelmed with questions, and the chancellor interrogated her with the keenest curiosity; but to all the inquiries put to her she replied with a readiness and candour which surprised the whole party. She was desired to give the names of those engaged in the conspiracy, as well as of him who first informed her of it. She answered that her own name was Lorimer, that she was a widow living upon her own property. As for the man, her informant, he was a Swiss named Cabert, of about thirty years of age, and had long been her intimate friend: however, the embarrassed tone with which she pronounced these last words left room for the suspicion that he had been something dearer to her than a friend.

The examination over, and the 100,000 francs she had demanded given to her, she retired, but followed at a distance by a number of spies, who were commissioned to watch her slightest movement.

Cabert, the Swiss, was arrested in a furnished lodging he occupied in Rue Saint Roch, and sent without delay to Versailles, where, as before, M. d'Aiguillon with his two colleagues waited in my study to receive and question the prisoner. Cabert was a young and handsome man, whose countenance bore evident marks of a dissolute and profligate life. He confessed, without any difficulty, that his only means of gaining a livelihood were derived from the generosity of a female friend, but when he was pressed upon the subject of the conspiracy, he no longer replied with the same candour, but merely answered in short and impatient negatives the many questions put to him, accompanied with fervent protestations of innocence; adding, that implacable enemies had fabricated the whole story, only that they might have an opportunity of wreaking their vengeance, by implicating him in it.

"Accuse not your enemies," cried I, for the first time mingling in the conversation, "but rather blame your benefactress; it is Madame Lorimer who has denounced you, and far from intending to harm you by so doing, she purposes dividing with you the 100,000 livres which are to reward her disclosures."

I easily found, by the frowning looks directed towards me by the three gentlemen present, that I had been guilty of great imprudence in saying so much; but Cabert, wringing his hands, uttered, with the most despairing accent:

"I am lost! and most horribly has the unfortunate woman avenged herself."

"What would you insinuate?"

"That I am the victim of an enraged woman," replied he.

He afterwards explained that he had been the lover of Madame Lorimer, but had become wearied of her, and left her in consequence; that she had violently resented this conduct; and, after having in vain sought to move him by prayers and supplications, had tried the most horrible threats and menaces.

It was deemed impossible to allow this man to go at large; accordingly M. de la Vrillière issued a *lettre de cachet*, which sent him that night to seek a lodging in the Bastille. It was afterwards deemed advisable to put him to the torture, but the agonies of the rack wrung from him no deviation from, or contradiction of what he had previously alleged.

The affair had now become mysterious and inexplicable. However, a speedy termination was most imperatively called for; if it were permitted to become generally known, it could not fail of reaching the ears of the king, whose health was daily declining; and M. de Quesnay had assured us that in his present languid state the shock

produced by news so alarming, might cause his instantaneous death.

Whilst we remained in uncertainty as to our mode of proceeding in the business, Cabert the Swiss, three days after his admission into the Bastille, expired in the most violent convulsions. His body was opened, but no trace of poison could be discovered: our suspicions were however awakened, and what followed confirmed them.

Madame Lorimer was arrested. She protested that she had been actuated by no feelings of enmity against her unfortunate lover, whom she had certainly reproached for having expended the money she furnished him with in the society of other females, and to the anger which arose between herself and Cabert on the occasion could she alone ascribe his infamous calumnies respecting her; that, for her own part, she had never ceased to love him, and, as far as she knew, that feeling was reciprocal; and, in betraying the conspiracy, her principal desire, next to the anxious hope of preserving the king, was to make the fortune of Cabert. She was confined in the Bastille, but she did not long remain within its walls; for at the end of a fortnight she died of an inflammatory disease. Her death was marked by no convulsions, but the traces of poison were evident.

These two violent deaths occurring so immediately one after another (as not the slightest doubt existed that Cabert had likewise died of poison) threw the ministers into a sad state of perplexity. But to whom could they impute the double crime, unless to some accomplice, who dreaded what the unhappy prisoners might be tempted to reveal. Yet the conduct of the Jesuitical priests stated by Madame Lorimer to be the principal ringleaders in the plot, although exposed to the most rigorous scrutiny, offered not the slightest grounds for suspicion. Neither did their letters (which were all intercepted at the various

post-houses) give any indication of a treasonable correspondence.

M. de Sartines caused the private papers of the suspected parties to be opened during their owners' absence, without discovering anything which could compromise their character. I am speaking, however, of the Fathers Corbin, Berthier and Cerutti, for all our efforts could not trace Father Dumas throughout all Paris.

Nor was the innocence of the Parliamentarians less evident; they vented their hatred against the ministry, and particularly against M. de Maupeou, in pamphlets, couplets and epigrams, both in French and Latin, but they had no idea of conspiracies or plots.

And thus terminated an affair, which had caused so much alarm, and which continued for a considerable period to engage the attention of ministers. How was the mystery to be cleared up? The poisoned orange-flower water, and the sudden deaths of the two prisoners, were facts difficult to reconcile with the no less undeniable innocence of the three accused Jesuits. The whole business was to me an incomprehensible mass of confusion, in which incidents the most horrible were mingled. At last we agreed that the best and only thing to be done was to consign the affair to oblivion.

But there were circumstances which did not so easily depart from the recollection of my excellent friend, the Maréchale de Mirepoix. "My dear soul," said she to me one day, "have you ever inquired what became of the 100,000 livres given to Madame Lorimer? She had no time to employ them in any way before her imprisonment in the Bastille. You ought to inquire into what hands they have fallen."

I fully comprehended the drift of this question, which I put to M. de Sartines the first time I saw him.

"Bless me," exclaimed he, "you remind me that these

100,000 livres have been lying in a drawer in my office. But I have such a terrible memory ! "

" Happily," replied I, " I have a friend whose memory is as good as yours seems defective upon such occasions. It will not be wise to permit such a sum to remain uselessly in your office : at the same time I need not point out that you, by your conduct in the late affair, have by no means earned a right to them."

He endeavoured to make a joke of the affair, but indeed it seemed to accord as ill with his natural inclination as did the restitution of the 100,000 livres. However, he brought them to me the following day, and I placed them in a porcelain vase which stood upon my chimney-piece. Unfortunately Comte Jean presented himself. He came to inform me that my husband had again arrived in Paris. I did not disguise the vexation which this piece of intelligence excited in me.

" And wherefore has Comte Guillaume returned to Paris ? " inquired I, angrily.

" Because he is afraid."

" Afraid of what ? " replied I.

" Of being murdered," answered Comte Jean. " It is a most horrible and authentic story. Imagine to yourself the dangers of his situation : some brigands, who have a design on his life, have written him an anonymous billet, in which they protest they will certainly murder him, unless he deposits 50,000 livres in a certain place. You may suppose his terror ; money he had none, neither was his credit sufficiently good to enable him to borrow any. As a last and only chance, he threw himself into a carriage, and hastened, tremblingly, to implore your assistance."

" I am extremely distressed, my dear brother-in-law," replied I, " that I am just as poor, and as unable to afford the necessary aid as yourself ; my purse is quite empty."

" Faith, my dear sister-in-law, I am not surprised at

that if you convert a china vase into a receptacle for your bank-notes."

Saying this, he drew a bundle of notes from the hiding-place in which I had deposited them. "Do you know," continued Comte Jean, "I really think we shall find money enough here." He began to count them; and when he had finished he said, "My dear sister, neither your husband nor myself wish to importune you, or put you to any inconvenience, therefore you shall merely oblige him with the loan of these 50,000 livres to extricate him from his present peril; they shall be faithfully and quickly restored to you, and a note of hand given you for that purpose if you desire it." So saying, he divided the money into two parts, replaced one in the vase, and pocketed the other.

CHAPTER XI

A DIFFICULT CASE

NOTHING could exceed the bitterness with which I was regarded by the female members of the royal family. The three princesses, with the dauphiness, inveighed most bitterly against my manners, conduct, dress, expenses; nothing escaped their criticism, and most particularly did they exclaim at my extravagance in building a country house in the environs of Versailles. It is true, that at first I laughed at all these impotent attempts at injuring me; still I have no doubt, but by dint of continual annoyances, my enemies would have rendered me as ill-natured and vindictive as they were themselves had I remained much longer at Versailles. My sisters-in-law had their share in my torment, and above all, Madame de Fumel, who deafened me with her complaints, until at last I said to her husband, "My good sir, I never meet your wife without feeling assured of being thrown into low spirits for the whole of the day."

She was a person neither handsome not agreeable, who would have passed through the world without exciting the smallest notice, had she not been gifted with a large fortune and an illustrious birth. Her husband was a merry creature, whose *embonpoint* bespoke a jovial and facetious temperament; his wit consisted in a ready and boisterous laugh, which he introduced upon all occasions; his sensibility was composed of a long list of shrugs and grimaces, and his sense was principally evinced by his remaining silent when he could not conveniently have borne his part in the conversation: his virtues were all of

the negative kind, and he was known by the surname of the "Good Man," merely because he was neither my husband nor Comte Jean. His unaffected disposition greatly pleased me, and I should have seen him more frequently but for his better half, who was a perfect fury.

The Comte d'Hargicourt (for it was thus he styled himself after having been known by the appellation of the Chevalier and Marquis du Barri), went his way through the world honestly and inoffensively, making no enemies if he formed no friends. I, however, esteemed him greatly, and raised him to the rank of colonel without his ever having smelled powder; he required nothing more than my favour and interest to procure his advancement, and I only waited the convenient moment for procuring him the title of Marshal of France. He said to me one day, as we were walking at Choisy:

"Pray, sister, do you know the Baroness de N—— ?"

"No, I do not," answered I.

"You knew her at least formerly," said he, "under her first name of Madame Pater."

"Oh, yes! I recollect," said I; "she is very beautiful. And where did you meet with her ?"

"At the house of the Duc de Duras, where she is a frequent visitor."

"And do you visit her at her own house ?"

"Certainly."

"In that case," replied I, "her second husband has not the jealousy of her former one, who used to get rid of the crowd of admirers who fluttered about her, by saying, 'Gentlemen, my house cannot possibly be to your ideas, for I am old-fashioned enough to keep my wife company both by day and night; consequently your services can be dispensed with.'"

This Madame Pater, since Baroness de N——, really

possessed an uncommon share of beauty; and had her mind but equalled her beauty, she might have seen the whole Court at her feet; but, without being wholly destitute of sense, she had not the sort that was admired in France. Cold, taciturn and haughty, she seemed to think universal homage her right and claim; and her repulsive manners kept back those whom her beauty had attracted. Her former husband had shown himself jealous and mistrustful, but the Baron de N——, more politic, kept at a distance, and by no means objected to the arrival of any signal piece of good fortune, however attributable to the charms of his wife, who, during her first marriage, had moved in a sort of sphere where we had frequently met; however, I had long lost sight of her, and should have forgotten her altogether had not the enthusiasm with which she had inspired my brother-in-law brought her back to my recollection.

He was extolling the beauty of his beloved baroness when Comte Jean joined us, and began complaining to his brother of his having neglected him greatly of late. D'Hargicourt made the best excuse he could recollect just then, and took leave of us.

"You must not be surprised at the frequent absence of d'Hargicourt," said I to Comte Jean, "the poor fellow is in love."

"In love!" repeated Comte Jean. "Not with his wife, I trust."

"No, no," cried I; "such a failing does not belong to your family, but with the Baroness de N——, the late Madame Pater. He has become acquainted with her at the house of the Duc de Duras, where she had talked to him greatly respecting us, and most particularly has been very minute in her inquiries respecting me."



(*Victoria and Albert Museum.*)

MARIE ANTOINETTE, AT THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN

From the painting by F. H. Drouais.

At these latter words I saw the forehead of my brother-in-law darken over with frowns; he folded his arms, and began to pace the room with rapid strides; then coming opposite to where I sat, he said:

"And is it possible that you do not see the drift of all this?"

"Bless me, Comte Jean," said I, smiling, "what has your sagacity discovered now?"

"Oh, nothing," replied he, with an air of importance, "a mere trifle; only the Duc de Duras wishes to poach on our manor. The Baroness de N—— is an artful creature, who is making a tool of that poor silly dupe d'Hargicourt. But you warn me in time, and I am ready to receive the enemy."

"Are we then deceived?" cried I. "Ah! I begin to comprehend the danger. Yes, yes, my dear duke, you shall pay for this; I will tear out your perfidious eyes the first time I see your dissembling face."

"Have a care, my dear sister," replied Comte Jean; "there may possibly be no truth in all our suspicions; let us go to work gently, and not spoil everything by an ill-judged impetuosity. Just let d'Hargicourt fall into the snare without warning him of it, his straightforward uprightness would ruin everything; but we may carry on our schemes under his colours."

A few minutes after the count had quitted me the Maréchale de Mirepoix arrived: she found me agitated, and demanded the cause.

"I am very unhappy," replied I. "I detest a person, and yet I am strictly enjoined to receive him with all the smooth policy of a regular courtier."

"Mercy upon me, my dear!" returned the maréchale, "how you talk. Why, have you not yet learned to practise deceit without an effort? Alas! we do not live in the days of innocence, but in the iron age, and moreover at

Court. But who has offended you? Tell me who is the unfortunate object of your displeasure?"

"I have been desired not to name him, but still I must tell you, for that will give me an opportunity of speaking of him as he deserves, although I dare not use my nails in disfiguring his face. The traitor is the Duc de Duras."

"Poor man!" cried the maréchale; "and what has he done, if I may inquire?"

"Oh, hitherto I believe he has only sinned in intention; but he would fain supplant me by introducing the late Madame Pater—she who is now the Baroness de N——"

"Why, indeed," said the maréchale, taking a pinch of snuff, "there must be some little truth in what you tell me, for a confused report has already reached my ear."

"And yet," said I, indignantly, "you have never said anything to me."

"And what good would that have done?" said she, calmly. "Do you not know that there are a thousand envious of your present post, and a hundred who flatter themselves with purchasing it at cost price. You ought certainly to be sufficiently on your guard to prevent their outbidding you."

"You have, then, heard mention of this scheme?" said I.

"I have and I have not. I was the other day at the house of Madame du Deffant, with the Maréchale de Luxembourg, Mesdames de Cambis and de Boufflers, the Bishop de Mirepoix, and le Carracioli. The conversation turned upon Madame de N——. Le Carracioli, who is as spiteful as a monkey, declared that she was to be admitted to a share of your power, and that she owed being promoted to the honour of being your

colleague entirely to the skilful management of the Duc de Duras."

"And what did the rest of the party at Madame du Deffant's say to this?"

"Very little, on account of my being there."

"One thing," said I, "seems at least certain, that the intrigue is known."

"Or at least presumed possible; for I can assure you, the assertions of Carracioli do not always obtain implicit credence. The Neapolitan is esteemed justly as a man of great wit, but decidedly the greatest liar in the world."

"Indeed!" replied I; "then let Signor Carracioli beware of exercising his inventive powers upon subjects which so nearly concern me, or I will speedily arrange for his return to his own country."

"Nay," interrupted the maréchale, "I really think his proneness to falsehood and exaggeration may rather be employed to serve than injure your cause."

As the maréchale pronounced these words she stopped, and, after a moment's silence, continued, "Pardon me, my dear friend, if I strongly counsel you to avoid any fracas with the Duc de Duras. The duties of his employment keep him perpetually about the king's person, and an open quarrel between you would greatly annoy his majesty, who, as you know, is too much habituated to him to be easily reconciled to his loss, were you to seek his dismissal. And who can tell whether Louis might not seek his society even in the house of this very Madame de N——. Keep on terms of amity with him; depend upon it, the king will be highly gratified with you for so doing."

These observations clearly pointed out to me the necessity of prudence, and I promised the maréchale I would strictly adhere to her advice; I waited likewise till Comte Jean had investigated the affair. I therefore continued to treat the duke as usual, whilst I carefully

concealed all my uneasiness from the king, whom I knew too well to lose my time in questioning. He was the most expert dissembler in all France, and, what I could not endure in his character, was the ease and coolness with which he could assume the appearance of friendship and interest towards those very persons he had resolved upon depriving of their place at Court, and dismissing them from office.

The king had acquired this fault (which my natural frankness exalted into a crime) from the Duc de Villeroi, his tutor, and Cardinal de Fleury, his Mentor; both of whom had inculcated dissimulation as a virtue indispensably necessary to kings. Thus I well knew that if there really did exist any understanding between Louis and the Baroness de N——, it was not from his lips I should hear a confession of it; his greatest pleasure consisted in those little acts of infidelity which he could commit unknown to me. For many days I remained seriously uneasy; the Comte d'Hargicourt visited me daily. I spoke to him of the baroness, of whom he still continued greatly enamoured, although he no longer pronounced her name without pain and confusion. I inquired the cause of this change. "My elder brother," replied he, "does me great injustice; he accused me only yesterday of aiding the Baroness de N—— by my indiscretion, to spy all your proceedings. His charge was very painful to me, and I have determined for the future to be more on my guard how I reply to even the most indifferent question."

I advised him to persevere in so wise a resolution, and not to repeat anything, however innocent, which might be so ingeniously tortured into mischief by the evil-disposed.

Nearly a week had elapsed, when one morning Comte Jean entered my apartment with an air of triumph.

"Victoria!" cried he, "the game is ours. This paper contains the whole story of the intrigue; Blagnac has done wonders; he is worth a dozen of Parisian valets." (Blagnac was the name of the valet de chambre of my brother-in-law, Comte d'Hargicourt, and Comte Jean had bribed him to make a surreptitious raid upon the baroness's private papers.)

"What have you learned then?" inquired I.

"All, my good sister: the fellow played his part so well with the femme de chambre of the baroness (by the way, he found the task easier, as the girl was young and pretty), that she told him all she knew, and even more. This letter was intended to be put into the post; Blagnac took charge of it; it is a most curious production, written by the baroness in German, of which I have had a double copy made. One is for you, take it, and make what use you think proper of it."

I lost no time in perusing the following letter, which certainly might serve as a model of German *naïveté*:

My Kindest and Much-esteemed Cousin,—I have been more successful than I could have ventured to anticipate, and in a short time I shall be the envy of every female but yourself, my excellent cousin, who love me too well to feel jealous at my good fortune. I have already informed you of the friendly intentions of his grace the Duc de Duras, first gentleman in waiting to the king, and besides that, my dear cousin, I have had the extreme honour of being presented to his majesty, Louis XV, who was so good as to praise my beauty; indeed I am daily expecting fresh proofs of his gracious approbation. But, alas! my dear cousin, this great prince is growing old, like the poorest of his subjects, although that artful creature the Comtesse du Barri contrives, by one deceitful scheme and another, to make him believe he is still young. However, I am told

her influence is quite on the decline, and I trust the time is not far distant when the king will perceive that there are other females near him more worthy in every respect of his royal preference.

Accident has favoured me with an admirer, capable of furnishing me with much information on many important subjects; he is a brother-in-law of this Madame du Barri, a young man, not eminently qualified to shine as a statesman, but particularly useful as a babbler and revealer of secrets.

The remainder of this letter bore no reference to me, and merely related to family affairs.

"What think you of this epistle?" inquired the count, as I laid it down.

"The affair is not so far advanced as I had thought it," replied I; "and I begin to feel rather less alarm."

"I did not confine myself," continued Comte Jean, "to abstracting the letter, but I went further still; I called immediately upon the lieutenant of police. We agreed that M. Rigeley d'Oigny should carry the original to his majesty after the discussion which takes place to-day in the private cabinet; we are in hopes that it may have the double effect of disturbing the king in his amour, and drawing down his displeasure upon the Duc de Duras."

I had no advice to give in an affair which appeared already settled and arranged; I therefore left Comte Jean and M. de Sartines to act as they thought proper, whilst I determined to use my best weapons in defence of my own cause. I redoubled my usual attentions and assiduities towards the king, increased my natural gaiety and vivacity, varied each day my ornaments and style of dress; by turns a timid shepherdess or a sprightly coquette, a dishevelled Bacchante or a tender and languishing maiden,

till poor Louis had no time to recover from one fit of surprise and admiration till he was thrown into another. However, he preserved a strict silence upon the subject of the letter of the baroness; still he saw her less and less frequently, whilst the Duc de Duras seemed lost in astonishment at my increasing favour. One day that we were alone together I could not refrain from saying:

"My lord duke, you will certainly lose your cause."

"What cause, madam?" asked he.

"That which you expected to gain through the interference of the Baroness de N——"

The duke was overcome with confusion; but darting on him a look of sovereign contempt, I quitted him to join Madame de Flavacourt, who had just entered the room. The poor duke could not recover himself the whole of the evening, and I was sufficiently avenged by the sight of his evident disquietude.

Whilst Comte Jean and myself were amusing ourselves at the expense of M. de Duras, the poor duke continued upon thorns. The worthy man had no objection to aid his sovereign, as a faithful subject should do, in the prosecution of his pleasures, but he by no means liked the idea of involving himself in an open quarrel with me before his schemes were sufficiently matured to incur my displeasure without any personal risk. Early the following day a note was brought me from the alarmed duke, praying of me to grant him an interview as early as convenient.

After some little hesitation I returned a verbal message by his valet de chambre, signifying that M. de Duras might call on me whenever he pleased.

The duke was not slow in profiting by my permission; he soon arrived, dressed in all his best smiles and graces, and seeking, under the mask of an assumed ease and cheerfulness of demeanour, to conceal the embarrassment

he really felt. I returned his salutation with the same ceremonious politeness, and certain of being able to torment him whenever I pleased, allowed him to commence a studied strain of conversation upon indifferent subjects, evidently spun out by him with a view to put off the fearful discussion which brought him to me.

"Madam," said he, at last, with a sort of involuntary agitation, "you sported with my feelings yesterday in the most cruel manner; a most cutting observation fell from your lips; it was altogether so very painful to my sentiments, that I considered it an act of duty as well as friendship——"

"Friendship, my lord!" interrupted I; "say, rather, that my remark boded ill for your interests."

M. de Duras exclaimed against the severity of my language, protesting that he felt for me the liveliest and most sincere attachment.

"Sincere!" repeated I; "you must pardon me, my lord duke, if I have my doubts on that point: but my observation of yesterday was prematurely uttered. I attacked when I should have been content to have awaited my adversary's first blow."

Again the duke solicited an explanation of the mystery contained in my remarks.

"I see," said he, "that I am the victim of some black calumny, and my enemies appear to have succeeded in injuring me in your estimation."

"They have at least endeavoured so to do, my lord duke," answered I; "but in that respect you have fared no worse than the rest of my friends and adherents. I have ever rejected with disdain all such base insinuations; and I now flatter myself that you will be enabled to prove satisfactorily that you have not forfeited your reputation for candour and open dealing."

"Most assuredly, madam, I shall be able with ease to

establish my claims to such a character, at least," replied the duke.

"Then pray, my lord, begin; I am all attention to what you have to say."

These words, pronounced in a dry and sarcastic manner, were far from satisfying him to whom they were addressed, and we resumed our original position with regard to each other. The duke, who had by no means intended to lead me to this point, saw at once that he must determine upon some measure by which to extricate himself from his present unpleasant situation. "Madam," said he, at length, "I will be candid with you; for between persons like ourselves good faith alone should be employed. You accuse me of having attempted to introduce the Baroness de N—— into the Château of Versailles, with a view of placing her in his majesty's way. I declare the charge to be wholly false, and certainly it would not be me who would wish to provoke such a revolution in his majesty's preference."

Delighted to see him thus losing every advantage, I pressed the duke with fresh questions.

"Yet I presume you are acquainted with the lady in question?"

"I am so, madam."

"And you think her handsome?"

"She is generally admitted to be so," answered the duke; "and I must confess, that I know but of one female of more surpassing loveliness."

"Pray no compliments, my lord," said I, coolly bowing; "but this lady—you see her frequently, I believe?"

"Occasionally, madam."

"And what is your opinion of her? Is she amiable, sensible? Of an estimable character? Or is she a person capable of injuring her friends?"

"No, madam," replied de Duras, quickly, "I know her sufficiently well to be quite persuaded that no circumstance could ever induce her to betray those who would fain have served her."

"In that case," rejoined I, "I must leave it to you to decide on which side the fault lies. Here, my lord," continued I, putting a paper into his hand, "here is the exact copy of a letter, the original of which is in the possession of his majesty. Take the trouble of reading it; it will convince you that I am much better informed than you suppose me to be."

The duke, ignorant of what the paper contained, eagerly unfolded it, and continued to read, or rather to study it with long and fixed attention; not knowing what to reply, yet feeling well aware that some remark was necessary.

"What can I say to all this, madam?" cried he, at length. "This letter surprises me beyond expression; the baroness must be the basest and vilest of her sex. However——" He stopped.

"Pray proceed, my lord duke," said I. "I am all attention to your explanation."

"Well, then, madam," returned he, hesitatingly, "you already possess it: the confession is made, you are informed of all I wished to conceal; and since disguise is useless, I must acknowledge the truth of everything contained in this letter, with the exception of those remarks concerning you, which I pledge my honour never proceeded from me. No, madam, I entertain too sincere and warm a regard for you."

"Stay, my lord! nor insult me further with these idle professions. You have been worse than an open or declared enemy. I will not annoy the king by communicating to him your perfidious conduct; he is satisfied with you, and I respect his preference too much to disturb it,

but never shall you obtain from me the slightest mark of favour; and whenever I draw out any list of persons by his majesty's command, you may be very certain of being excluded from it."

During this address the duke stood motionless, with his eyes fixed on the ground, looking the very personification of a disappointed courtier: then, stammering out a few words of regret at having been so unfortunate as to lose my confidence, he bowed and retired.

I was soon visited by the good-natured mediatrix of all those with whom I had any cause of complaint—the Maréchale de Mirepoix, who, in her anxiety to live upon terms of universal goodwill and amity, never decidedly espoused the quarrel of any person.

"And so, my dear creature," cried she, "you and poor de Duras are completely at war, like cat and dog. You appear to have vented your anger most warmly, and he still dreads fresh explosions. Depend upon it the poor man was drawn into the scheme without fully comprehending the part he was acting; and, as he protests, thought much less of injuring you than of benefiting himself."

"Leave this double-faced man, my dear maréchale, I beseech of you," said I; "and if you really love me, talk of something else."

Madame de Mirepoix was about to reply, when the king entered with his grand almoner; they were both laughing immoderately; I inquired the cause. "I must refer you to the cardinal," answered the king.

I turned to his eminence, and begged of him to afford myself and Madame de Mirepoix an opportunity of sharing in their mirth; and M. de la Roche Aymon, who seldom required much solicitation to talk, readily undertook to gratify me, and related the following anecdote:

"Mass was yesterday celebrated, according to custom, at the church of the Quinze Vingts. In pursuance of an ancient rule, the office of sounding the bell at the elevation is performed by a blind man. Upon the present occasion the person upon whom devolved the performance of this sacred duty being compelled to quit the altar, left it for a minute, and returned with all possible haste, just as the priest had concluded the introductory prayer; in considerable agitation he threw himself on his knees, with one hand sought to regain his little bell, which he could not immediately find, and with the other attempted to raise the garment of the officiating priest. A loud scream was heard; a sudden tumult arose, and the unfortunate blind man was dragged from the altar with every indication of rage and abhorrence."

"What had the poor creature done?" inquired I, with much anxiety.

"Alas! madam," replied the cardinal, "he had mistaken the robe of a female devotee for the sacerdotal vestment."

At these words we were seized with an irresistible fit of laughter, in which the king most heartily joined.

The grand almoner next related to us that at Rheims a female servant, very pious, but still more silly, had been desired by her confessor, by way of penance, to strike her bosom every time she heard the bell sound during the service. Unfortunately she had selected as the spot for performing this duty a church at which two masses were celebrating; the first was duly and properly noticed by the fair penitent, who dealt out her blows with the most praiseworthy energy; but, lo! a second bell was heard, and the poor girl felt no small difficulty in deciding how to discharge the double penance: so, while with one hand she struck her bosom the most furious blows, with the

other she struck herself on a part of her body rather more suited for such rough treatment.

The Cardinal de la Roche Aymon possessed a long string of these tales, which he delighted in repeating, and he kept us all amused for hours at a stretch.

CHAPTER XII

MY POWER IN PERIL

One fine morning my sister-in-law, Chon, came into my chamber with a grave and solemn air.

"My brother is arrived," said she.

"Well," replied I, "let him come in."

"My dear sister," said she, "I am not speaking of Comte Jean."

"Of whom, then, can you be speaking?" cried I.

"Of Comte Guillaume, your husband."

"Heaven defend me," exclaimed I, "what brings him to Paris without my knowledge or consent? It is a great presumption on his part. Did we not agree that he should remain at Toulouse?"

"It appears," replied Chon, "that he has had some disagreement there, and having espoused the part of the ancient magistracy, he has come hither to see and to speak with you on the subject."

"All that I can do for him," said I, "is to obtain a *lettre de cachet* from the Duc de Vrillière, so as to shelter him that way from the anger of the chancellor."

Chon, who easily perceived that I spoke jestingly, began to assure me how greatly her brothers, as well as herself, regretted the unexpected arrival of Comte Guillaume; she entreated me not to refuse him the short interview he was desirous of obtaining; and with my natural good-nature I promised to see him the first time I went to Paris. The truth was, I felt some little curiosity to converse with my husband; for, excepting for the

responses made by him during the nuptial ceremony, the very sound of his voice was unknown to me.

I allowed several days to pass before I visited Paris. At length I went thither under pretext of calling upon the Maréchale de Mirepoix. I took Chon with me in order that she might go and forewarn her brother of my being ready to receive him. He must have had some previous intimation of my coming, for he presented himself at my door nearly as soon as we had quitted the carriage; he looked greatly embarrassed; I held out my hand to him.

"I trust you are well, sir," said I; "I am happy to see you. I presume you were weary of Toulouse?"

"You are right, madam," replied he, bowing. "Toulouse is a sad, gloomy place; besides, I had an ardent desire to pay my respects to you."

"I thank you, sir," said I. "Our interviews have been tolerably rare until now. I only pray they may continue so."

"Ah, madam, 'tis that distresses me. Could I but hope——"

"A truce with these idle compliments, M. le Comte," cried I; "'twas not to listen to them I came hither; let us behave more honestly to each other, and speak with candour."

"Willingly, madam; I am entirely of your opinion."

"Listen to me, Monsieur le Comte. When we were married we were all but entire strangers to each other; you did not espouse me for my beauty, neither did I bestow my hand upon you for the pleasure of being your wife. I wanted a name, you wanted a fortune; each of us obtained the object we were in need of. I am fully satisfied with my bargain: are you not content with yours?"

"No, madam; I consider myself shamefully treated; my elder brother keeps everything in his own hands."

"My good sir," said I, "Comte Jean is the greatest feudalist in the world, and will not easily lay aside his right of seniority; but it is my wish that you should have an honourable subsistence. I will therefore cause your pension to be so far augmented that both yourself and any fair companion you may choose cannot fail of being satisfied."

My husband thanked me again and again for my goodness. I wished to put an end to the scene, and therefore rang for Chon, who entered, and led away Comte Guillaume, whom I never again beheld. My noble husband little dreamed that, at that very moment, I was endeavouring to procure an edict from Rome for the dissolution of my marriage. I had formed great projects, or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, they had been formed for me. That Marquise de Maintenon, I could not get her out of my head.

I have hinted at my intention of dissolving my marriage, a measure to which I was strongly urged by every one around me excepting, indeed, those belonging to my husband's family. It was flattery certainly, although none could have been more palatable than the continual assertion of those who sought to profit by my credulity, that my husband was the only obstacle to my sharing the throne of Louis XV. The chancellor was one of the first to put this absurd idea into my head. He was doing his utmost, he said, to lead the king's mind to the favourable contemplation of such a measure. For my own part, it seemed too much of a jest to elevate the frail mistress of Nicolas Mathon to the dignity of queen of the empire of France, and I even smiled at the absurdity of fancying myself the grandmother of the dauphin, and, as such, compelling even the dauphiness to bow the knee of respect and duty.

Madame de Monaco warmly encouraged me in my ambitious projects; interest, however, was the cause of

this lady's energetic attempts to hurry forward my schemes of fortune; and, as her own views were directed to forming a marriage with the Prince de Condé, she was very anxious that the king should, by his union with me, afford her a precedent upon which to raise her own matrimonial greatness. With a view to accelerate the business, she introduced to me an advocate, named Linguet, who, at that period, bore a high reputation, which, indeed, he still lives to enjoy.

Whilst these steps were paving the way at home for my divorce, I was equally anxious to have some efficient agent sent for that purpose to the Court of Rome.

"The man suited for that embassy," said the chancellor, "should be one as devoid of virtue as consistency; a fellow whom we might altogether disown if occasion required it; but to succeed in his mission this man should be both a profligate and an intrigant, as clever as cunning."

"And where, my good cousin," cried I, "am I to find such a person? I know of no one within the circle of my acquaintance so highly gifted, unless, indeed, I were to select one of our prelates as my ambassador to the Holy See."

"I have precisely the description of messenger you stand in need of," replied the chancellor. "I am sure of my man, who is a *provençal* abbé, one of the very worst of the ecclesiastical profession, and that is saying no trifle. He is witty, lively, eager for advancement, and covetous of money; promise him a bishopric and he will stop at nothing. Rather than miss the reward, I will engage that he will turn the very stones of Rome upside down."

This abbé was quickly engaged for my service. I will not now give his name, because he has attained to great eminence, and has become a prince of the Church. Although he did not succeed, I could not suffer his zeal to pass unrewarded, and he owes to me his fortune. He

had to struggle against a very powerful party, and before he had been enabled to obtain any decided advantage over them, I had given up my project of dissolving my marriage. Meanwhile my ambassador quitted Paris for Rome, furnished with a letter of credit for Cardinal de Bernis, who represented the King of France with the Holy Father.

M. de Bernis, upon receipt of my letter, easily perceived at what I was aiming; and, fearing to meddle with an affair which might place him on bad terms with the dauphin, he wrote me a truly Jesuitical reply.

I fancied, upon perusing his letter that my object was already effected, and my success perfectly sure; but my courtly education was yet incomplete, and Madame de Mirepoix took upon herself the office of putting the finishing stroke to it. We were sitting together after dinner; she had been relating to me a number of stories; all at once she stopped.

"I have a great mind," said she, "to scold you; you are committing a great indiscretion; whether by your own advice or that of others, I know not, but depend upon it, it will tend to your prejudice, and not a little assist the schemes of your enemies."

I readily divined to what the maréchale alluded to, and I replied, with some confusion:

"I do not see anything very ridiculous in seeking to dissolve a marriage."

"Ridiculous," exclaimed the maréchale, "is not the word; you should say *useless*. You cannot reach the end you propose; and shall I tell you why? The Abbé Terray is playing you false, I am perfectly sure. I do not believe too implicitly in the good faith of your cousin, the chancellor; and as for the cardinal, learn that he has been consulting the Abbé de Vermond, as to which will be his safest path in the course of your affair."

The maréchale stopped here, but she might have gone on talking for hours without my interrupting her. At last my anger found vent in a torrent of words and expressions ill suited to the lips of a courtly dame, who believed herself on the very eve of becoming a queen.

"Ah, now you are in a rage," cried the maréchale, very composedly taking a pinch of snuff. "I like to see you in these fits, they so greatly set off your beauty. But to return to the subject we were discussing. I will give you one other piece of intelligence: the comptroller-general, Abbé Terray, will seek to interrupt your success by every means in his power, simply because he wishes to put Madame Dumerval in your place."

"Madame Dumerval, his own daughter?"

"Even so; and you must confess there is nothing so very improbable in the fact."

I was too horrified and astounded to say more.

I related what I had heard from the maréchale to the Duc d'Aiguillon. He replied, "Madame de Mirepoix is quite right. The royal family are apprised of your intentions, and the dauphin has been speaking to me respecting them this morning. I am charged to desire you will lay aside your measures for procuring a divorce, under penalty of incurring their eternal displeasure; there are some hidden agents industriously employed in irritating the whole royal party against you. I therefore entreat of you, my lovely friend, to be perfectly quiet in the affair." Spite of the advice of the Duc d'Aiguillon, I could not preserve the prudent silence he dictated towards the comptroller-general, whose insincerity I had long had reason to suspect, notwithstanding the increased and studied attentions he showed me. The daughter he sought to introduce to the king was the child of his mistress, Madame de Clerée, and married to a man who well deserved the aversion she entertained for him.

The Abbé Terray had never been good-looking, even in his best days, but when he called on me in answer to my indignant summons, he appeared with a pallid and distorted countenance, and something almost fiendish in his aspect. He endeavoured, however, to affect a coolness he was far from feeling; and, advancing with a ceremonious air, sought to conceal the tormenting anxiety he felt, under the veil of extreme respect.

"Pray, sir," I began, "what is your post in this kingdom?"

"Madam," replied he, hesitatingly, "I am comptroller-general of the finances."

"And I, sir," cried I, "am mistress of the king of France, a place I intend to keep; nor can I look on and see any person endeavouring to supplant me in it, more especially when that person happens to be one who has hitherto professed to be my friend."

"Nay, madam," answered the abbé, endeavouring to treat the matter jestingly, "I can affirm that I never thought of becoming your rival."

"No," exclaimed I, indignantly, "not for yourself, but for your daughter, would you seek to supplant me in the affections of the king. However, I warn you, I am aware of your treachery, and since you would have war, you shall have it openly and fairly—do you understand?"

The abbé sought in vain to speak, his tongue appeared to refuse its office, and at that moment the king was announced. The comptroller-general, hastily struggling to recover from his terror, attempted to pay his respects to his sovereign, but in so confused and embarrassed a manner that Louis easily perceived something uncommon had taken place.

Immediately that the Abbé Terray had departed, the king questioned me as to the scene he appeared to have interrupted when he entered the room.

"Sire," replied I, "your minister, not satisfied with discharging the duties of his own office, would fain entrench upon mine, and I have expressed to him my just resentment of his conduct."

"I do not comprehend you," answered the king.

"Oh, yes," cried I, "your majesty understands full well to what I allude. The Abbé Terray is desirous of offering his daughter, Madame Dumerval, for your acceptance, and you, who would not, he believes, refuse to receive the daughter of a priest, might find it no very difficult matter to put up with a mistress who is said to be tolerably good-looking."

"I dislike everything bordering on an impious jest," replied Louis, blushing. "I can easily perceive that you are the friend and correspondent of Voltaire."

The king's answer gave me no surprise. This good prince, however irregular in many of his habits, had a strong feeling of religious respect and veneration, even in the most trifling matters connected with it. Thus my using words having a reference at once to sacred and profane objects appeared to him as a species of sacrilege. I hastily answered, "Neither do I, sire, approve of impiety or impious proceedings. Your Abbé de Terray is a contemptible wretch, ready to sell his own child."

"That is not possible," cried Louis; "a priest prostitute his own daughter?"

"Exactly what I said this morning," said I; "but I do not see anything so very extraordinary in a priest, who has been impious enough to break his vow of chastity, seeking to turn even his children to profit."

The king protested to me that he had never once bestowed an idea upon Madame Dumerval, and, whether from confidence in him or myself, I believed what he said.

I experienced, nevertheless, one or two rather violent alarms, arising from the sudden attentions bestowed by

the king upon the Princesse de Lamballe. This lady was young, tolerably pretty and vivacious, but destitute of wit, and possessed of little or no knowledge of a Court life. I really am not sure that she ever thought of such a thing as attracting the notice of the king; all I remember is, that I feared she had designs upon him. Chon was for ever remarking, "The Princesse de Lamballe seems a prodigiously great favourite with the king."

My brother-in-law came one morning in a great bustle. "Sister," said he to me, "I have something of importance to say to you. I hear it everywhere whispered that this Savoyard princess is about to play us a slippery trick; keep your eye well upon her; it will never do to be outgeneralled by her."

Scarcely had Comte Jean quitted me, than the Duc d'Aiguillon entered, and repeated to me the same advice; if not precisely in similar terms, yet bearing a like meaning. In fact, I heard nothing but a long string of complaints, all ending in the same strain—"Beware!"

Again I sought advice from Comte Jean, and he suggested having recourse to the beauties of the Parc-aux-Cerfs.

"Surely," replied I, "the remedy would be worse than the disease."

"Not at all. You cannot draw any comparison between the Princesse de Lamballe and a young girl, whose ignorance of the world will effectually dispel your alarms of any ambitious ideas inducing her to aspire to that sovereign power so justly your own. Where would she find persons to support and maintain her interests? No, she would merely hold her situation so long as it suited you to suffer her; and when you desired her dismissal it would be done."

"I appear to be precisely in the same predicament in which the Marquise de Pompadour was placed."

"To be sure," answered Comte Jean; "in accepting her post you must expect to be burdened with the various duties appertaining thereto. Come, come; no false shame; this is merely a harmless *ruse de guerre*. Let us proceed boldly; but, first, you must give me full power to treat with *madame*."

I immediately furnished Comte Jean with a sort of letter of credit, with which he took his leave; whilst I remained, like a simpleton, nursing my ill-humour, and forming a thousand schemes for the downfall of the dangerous Princesse de Lamballe, whom I would gladly have sent to the remotest corner of the earth.

When Comte Jean presented himself at the Parc-aux-Cerfs, the governor of this sacred retreat was greatly alarmed, and even refused to grant him admission; but at the sight of my writing the inflexible gaoler began to relax, and at length consented to conduct him to the presence of *madame*. Having made known the purport of his mission, the lady informed him that he came in a propitious moment, for that she had then three *élèves* ready for presentation—Josephine de M——, a young lady of quality; Linette, a Flemish girl; and a native of Auvergne, named Dorothée. My brother-in-law objected to the first on account of her birth, but Dorothée was precisely what he sought for. She had just attained her eighteenth year, was exceedingly beautiful, and, still better for our purpose, was considered very simple. It was the custom at the Parc-aux-Cerfs to give to each of the *élèves* a portrait of the king, in order to prepare them for seeing him. In the same manner, the portraits of the young creatures who composed this establishment were shown to the king, in order to determine his choice. Comte Jean selected the last portrait which had been taken of Dorothée, and returned to the castle furnished with what

he styled a preservative against the charms of Madame de Lamballe.

Upon his return to the castle, he went in search of Chamilly, Lebel's successor, saying :

" Chamilly, you must convey this snuff-box to the king."

" How beautiful ! " exclaimed the valet, as he fixed his eyes upon the portrait ; " but, surely, you would not wish to introduce such a formidable candidate."

" My good friend," answered Comte Jean, " just listen to a little common sense, 'tis all I ask of you. The original of this charming miniature dwells in a neighbouring establishment, of which Lebel formerly had the superintendence."

Chamilly had wit, although it frequently suited his purpose to conceal it, that he might not give offence to others. He comprehended wonderfully well what we wished him to do, and hastily visiting the Parc-aux-Cerfs, returned perfectly dazzled with the beauty of Dorothée, whose miniature he contrived that same evening to place in his majesty's way.

Louis, who was a great connoisseur in beauty, hastily inquired where the original of so lovely a painting was to be met with. The obsequious Chamilly replied, that his majesty had only to inquire at the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and he would meet with her. The king gave one more look at the portrait, and then announced his intention of visiting the Parc-aux-Cerfs. We knew nothing of Dorothée, and had imagined her weak, and easily led, but we were in error. She was certainly modest and timid, but endowed with a powerful and fearless disposition, which was not to be intimidated or restrained ; besides this, she had a lover, who, after having been long separated from her, had at last discovered her in the Parc-aux-Cerfs. The intrepid Dorothée, who contrived to meet her lover in the gardens

which surrounded her prison, first learned from his lips that she was an inhabitant of that wretched place, set apart for the education of those unfortunate beings destined for the temporary gratification of the king of France; and the same instant which opened the eyes of the innocent girl to the true nature of her situation, witnessed the fervent vow with which she pledged herself never to yield to the splendid infamy prepared for her, nor to falsify the affection she had so long and faithfully cherished for the beloved of her heart.

I will now proceed with my narration. Louis XV repaired without delay to the Parc-aux-Cerfs, attired as a mere man of business; but, at the first glance of his noble and handsome countenance, Dorothée recognized her sovereign, before whom she stood confused and speechless. The king mistook her emotion for sudden admiration, and began to address her in the language of love; but, falling at his feet, "Sire," cried she, "you are known to me; I entreat your mercy and pardon for speaking thus boldly. You have many virtues; deign to respect mine. I am here by constraint, and when I was brought hither, I knew not the fate reserved for me; it is far too great and dazzling for my poor wishes; I am not worthy to aspire so high, and ask only to be restored to my liberty."

Louis XV was but little prepared for such a scene, and possibly it was the first refusal he had ever experienced within the walls of the Parc-aux-Cerfs. He sought in vain to overcome the objection of Dorothée, but finding her immovably fixed in her resolution, he returned home in extreme ill-humour.

No sooner had the king entered his apartment than he vented the full torrent of his rage upon poor Chamilly, who was anxiously waiting the result of his master's visit to the Parc-aux-Cerfs. Chamilly immediately flew to

complain of the treatment he had received to Comte Jean; Comte Jean hastened to lecture *madame* upon the want of proper management exhibited by her *élèves*, and *madame* flew in a rage to acquaint the trembling Dorothée that, as a fit reward for her presumptuous conduct towards the king, she should be for ever confined within the walls of a cloister.

The following morning I was at my toilette, when Henriette announced to me that a good-looking young man was earnestly entreating permission to speak to me. I desired he might be admitted; the lover of Dorothée (for it was no other) advanced, it is true, with an awkward and somewhat embarrassed manner, but at the same time with a frankness and confidence which greatly pleased and interested me. As he timidly glanced towards me I perceived that he was terribly agitated, and bestowed on him one of my most encouraging smiles. Thereupon he told me the whole story of his love for Dorothée, and ended by beseeching my protection and help. Here was a young and helpless girl soliciting my interest to escape from the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and I, the mistress of the king, the very person on whom her innocence relied for assistance, it was, who sought, by throwing her in the king's way as a temporary gratification, to wean him from a more formidable rival. Addressing myself to the trembling lover, I inquired:

"And how, sir, did you discover the retreat of your mistress? How manage to procure an interview with her?"

"Ah, madam," replied he, still harping on the same string, "we had loved each other since we were children."

I can scarcely describe to you, my friend, how much I was charmed with this simple, yet discreet, mode of reply.

"Madam," exclaimed the young man, in the most

supplicating tone, "will you forsake us in our misfortune? Will you not pity us?"

"My friend," answered I, "you and your mistress have greatly interested me; I will be your friend, and you shall, ere long, have proof of the sincerity of my intentions. Be prudent, and to-morrow shall restore to you your beloved Dorothée."

When the king next visited me, he appeared quite confused and ashamed of his prank.

"Sire," said I to him, "you have been somewhat gay lately."

"Yes," said he, affecting to smile, "but I have been an unsuccessful wooer."

"Well, but what are you going to do with your little rebel?" inquired I.

Louis was silent for a moment, and then replied:

"Would not the best way be to send her to a convent?"

"Tranquillize yourself," replied I; "the surest way to prevent these young people from speaking ill of you is to load them with benefits. I have already arranged everything. Let the poor girl marry the youth of her heart, and bestow upon her the usual marriage dowry, the jewels and clothes given upon such occasions."

"Well, be it so," answered Louis XV; "but, in my opinion, half the customary portion would be sufficient in the present instance."

I made no reply to this last attempt to economize, but arranged the whole affair according to my own inclinations, and had every reason to be satisfied with the result.

The nuptial ceremony took place without further delay.

When the affair was terminated, Comte Jean observed: "All this is vastly well; but Dorothée is gone, and Madame de Lamballe remains as dangerous an enemy as ever."

" Do as you please," answered I ; " I promise you I will not again interfere."

Comte Jean resumed the road towards the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and managed so well that his majesty wholly forgot, in the society of a young and lovely creature taken from its walls, all the fascinations of the Princesse de Lamballe.

CHAPTER XIII

A NEW LOVER

When first I had the good fortune to attract the king's regard, I did not find the Duc de Cossé Brissac amongst those courtiers who crowded around me with their flattering admiration. I remarked this defection with much regret, for the duke was spoken of as one of the most accomplished noblemen of the day. My female friends extolled him for his fine person, and his brave and noble disposition; whilst, by the other sex, he was equally commended for his frank, disinterested conduct, and the solidity of his judgment. All these encomiums excited my lively curiosity to satisfy myself whether the original really deserved all that was said in his behalf. But still M. de Cossé made no attempts for an introduction to me, and I knew not whether he were one of the Choiseul party or not.

Every person spoke in the most enthusiastic terms of the Duc de Cossé except the Duc d'Aiguillon, who hated M. de Brissac with a hatred arising from a secret jealousy of his many virtues, and the consciousness of his possessing every advantage which M. d'Aiguillon so vainly toiled to procure for himself.

M. d'Aiguillon left no means untried of injuring the Duc de Cossé in my opinion, relating to me various disreputable anecdotes of him, and repeating the most disgraceful things as having been said by the Duc de Cossé against me.

I was one day walking at Marly with the Maréchale de Mirepoix, who had been reviewing the merits of all the Court, praising some and criticising others.

"And why," asked she, "do you detest M. de Brissac?"

"Simply because he has conducted himself very shamefully towards me, and has circulated the most ill-natured and untrue reports."

"My dearest creature, you are still very ignorant of a life at Court, and take too much for granted what you hear from others. Far from calumniating you, M. de Brissac has more than twenty times taken up your defence."

Nothing more was said on the subject, and a month elapsed before the events I am going to relate took place. The Court was at Fontainebleau, a residence I greatly preferred to Versailles, on account of the much greater liberty to be enjoyed there; and I frequently availed myself of the leisure I managed to secure to take long morning walks in the surrounding woods, accompanied only by my faithful Henriette.

It was a beautiful morning in the month of September, the air was mild, and almost partaking of summer heat, the sky was cloudless, and scarcely the faintest zephyr ruffled the forest leaves. The king had just departed for the chase, and the noisy tumult which preceded this departure had given place to a profound silence. Desiring Henriette to follow me, I took my road towards the forest. I was by no means of a sentimental nature, but my imagination seemed on this occasion filled with an unusually romantic impulse, and as I walked I became lost in reveries of the most innocent yet pleasing description. Having entered a narrow path almost overgrown with tangled underwood, I perceived a young man of a fine and noble countenance, dressed in a most elegant and becoming hunting garb. A nearer approach convinced me it was the Duc de Brissac. He advanced towards me with a graceful bow, and congratulated himself upon the happiness of meeting with me. For my own part I remained overcome by contending emotions, scarcely able to articulate one word in reply,

and then, by way of covering my confusion, I began to utter some hasty remarks upon the beauty of the morning.

"Yes," replied the duke, "I do indeed think it a lovely morning, and how much has it improved within the last few minutes!"

"And why, may I inquire," said I, "is not your grace at the hunt?"

"The hunt," replied he, with an absent air. "I care very little at the present moment wherever it may be."

As he said this, the duke offered me his arm with that air of chivalrous gallantry which so well became him. I accepted it, and in a little time M. de Cossé and myself were wandering in the recesses of the forest.

We walked on in this manner for nearly an hour, when we arrived at one of the most solitary parts of the forest, on the summit of a hill, formed of rough blocks of stone piled together. My companion then quitting my arm, said, smilingly, "Do you not think, madam, that you are very confiding to trust yourself in so solitary a place with your most dangerous enemy?"

I had now recovered my self-possession, and easily guessed the duke's meaning.

"Indeed," replied I, "I have long since ceased to regard your grace as an enemy. I now think of you only as a friend who has been himself calumniated."

"Yes," exclaimed he, energetically, "shamefully, vilely calumniated; I have been the victim of a hateful intrigue. M. de Choiseul is my friend, it is true, but I have never approved of his conduct towards you; that of his family has been still more inexcusable, and I have never disguised my utter disgust at it. Since my first intimation of the well-founded prejudices you had formed respecting me I have been twenty times upon the point of soliciting

the favour of a quarter of an hour's interview, that I might have the opportunity of disproving such odious falsehoods."

This conversation lasted for some time, and I remarked with pleasure how eagerly M. de Cossé sought to exculpate himself in my eyes. He effectually removed every lingering doubt of his sincerity from my mind, for the manner in which he expressed himself was at once so frank, so persuasive, and so calculated to impress his hearers with an opinion of his sincerity, that I could not listen without being charmed into belief.

Time passed too swiftly for both of us, when Henriette, who had followed us at a little distance, approached and reminded me that my hour of dressing had arrived. We resumed the road to the Château, the duke accompanying me to the very door of my apartment, where, bowing respectfully, he quitted me.

In a few days Madame de Mirepoix besought an interview for the duke on the morrow, to which I gladly consented.

This approaching presentation occupied me the whole night; my thoughts, sleeping or waking, presented no other idea, and the morning found me still engaged in meditating upon it. Thus did I, without reflection, indulge a growing passion for one who very possibly might not bestow a second regard upon me; and, without considering the consequences to which such sentiments might lead, gave myself up to all the delightful anticipations of continually seeing and hearing an object I should have avoided rather than sought.

My friendship with this amiable man ripened apace, and it was with the utmost pleasure that I was able to do him a few small services, amongst which was the revocation of some *lettres de cachet*. On writing to tell him of my success in this, I received the following letter:

Yes, madam, you are, must be happy : for a mind like yours will always find its greatest happiness in succouring the unfortunate. Had you not desired me to conceal the facts, with how much pleasure should I have proclaimed to the world your generous sympathy with the distressed, and my own unfeigned admiration of your many amiable qualities. Never before have I known such an union of beauty and virtue. Pardon me for repeating an observation, which is for ever on my lips—" Why, oh why, did I not know you earlier ? "

My heart beat at this happy assurance that the growing passion I entertained for M. de Cossé had become mutual ; that I was loved by the only man whose affections appeared to me worth possessing ; and the bare idea was sufficient to make me happier than I had ever been in my whole life.

The next time that M. de Cossé saw me I was surrounded by the king and several of the courtiers. The duke approached, and said, in a low voice, " May I not hope for the opportunity of thanking you in private ? "

The king's eye was at that instant so fixed on my countenance that I could not reply ; but a few minutes afterwards I said, with apparent carelessness, " The day after to-morrow I shall spend the day at Paris ; I have many purchases to make, and the morning will not be sufficient for the purpose."

Whilst I was saying this, I looked at the Duc de Cossé, who perfectly comprehended my meaning ; his fine eyes thanked me with a glance too eloquent to be misunderstood, and all the rest of the evening he continued the life and spirit of the party. The Duc d'Aiguillon, who was also present, and who had, as I imagined, caught the look of mutual understanding which passed between M. de Cossé and myself, had looks that spoke daggers ; but

his gloomy sullenness had no effect on me, who, intoxicated with the anticipated delight of the day at Paris, could think of nothing else.

On the day appointed I repaired to Paris, dispensing with the attendance of either of my sisters-in-law. I know not whether the duke had set any person to watch my arrival, he came about a quarter of an hour after myself, looking handsomer than ever. I could not conceal my emotion at the sight of him ; he must have perceived it ; but, far from presuming on the circumstance, it only seemed to render him timid and respectful. At last, love, not as applying to our own feelings, but considered as a general passion, became the theme of our discourse. Nevertheless, though we spoke not of ourselves, yet every instant we inadvertently made some allusion or other to our personal sentiments and respective situations. I was much distressed at finding the duke struggling with some concealed emotion, and, whilst I endeavoured to learn the cause of his agitation, he suddenly seized my hand, which he covered with the tenderest kisses. I fully expected the *dénouement* was at hand, when, all at once, M. de Cossé rose, and stammering out a confused adieu, left me perplexed and uneasy at having so fully revealed a passion which perhaps was not returned.

The next morning, weary of tossing upon a sleepless pillow, I rang for Henriette to commence the business of the toilette. She held in her hand a letter, which had been brought by the handsome courier of the Duc de Cossé. I took this letter, and breaking the seal, which bore the impression of the arms of Brissac, I read as follows :

Madam,—Since my courage deserted me when I would have spoken to you, I have determined upon writing. What must you have thought of my senseless flight?

You must, you do despise me for it; I who, for one glance of your bright eyes, would dare death itself. I love you truly and passionately, and yet I fled from you. Yes, I repeat it, I love you. You have acquired over me the most fatal ascendancy, and my whole faculties, enslaved by your charms, seem able only to think or act as your will directs; but one cruel truth it is necessary I should ingenuously confide to you. Know, then, that dearly as I love you, another equally deserving with yourself shares my heart. She to whom I allude cannot boast the same peerless beauty with which you are endowed, but, like you, she is feeling, amiable, and she loves me. Duty, honour, my solemn vows, all bind me to her; at the foot of the altar I have solemnly sworn to be hers only; and here I repeat my oath even to you, whose heart it may chill towards me, that I will be hers, and hers only, till death dissolves our bonds.

Ah! in mercy pardon my madness; yet, if you can or do share in my feelings, send but one line of comfort, by assuring me that such felicity is mine; but, should my unfortunate passion provoke your displeasure, spare me, I entreat of you, all blame, all reproach, and think not that any earthly arguments can have power sufficient to pluck it from my soul. Pardon me my involuntary crime of yesterday, or console me for what I am at present suffering.

I knew not what to think of this singular epistle. On the one hand, it was evident that the Duc de Cossé loved me, and it was equally apparent that he still entertained a lively affection for his amiable wife. At last I sat down and wrote a letter, telling him that I should ever value his friendship, and that had it been my lot, gladly would I have shared every vicissitude that life could bring him; but as he loved his wife so truly, I would never be the one to come between them.

When I had concluded this letter I hastily despatched

it. Afterwards I threw myself on my bed, for I felt throughout my whole frame a most extreme languor and lassitude. I was still sleeping, when my dreams were broken by the arrival of the grand almoner, the Pope's nuncio, and, at last, Louis XV. My notary was soon after announced, and I was compelled to rise before the two prelates, who, with a gallantry truly episcopal, knelt by the side of my bed, each presenting me with a slipper. The king was highly pleased with the scene, and lost no time in repeating it to all he met, so that it was quickly circulated throughout the Château.

That day passed for me wretchedly enough, and early in the evening I went to bed, complaining of an illness I really felt. The king was immediately by my bedside, solicitous and tender. Presently Henriette approached me, holding a paper, which, under pretence of adjusting my pillow, she managed to slip under the covering of the bed. As she hastily held the letter to my view I saw that it came from the Duc de Cossé; but how was I to read it? The king, who was seized with occasional fits of curiosity, had only to ask me for it; and what would have become of me, had I thus furnished him with a written proof of my culpability? I was therefore constrained to put off the reading of this letter to a more convenient opportunity.

Louis XV insisted upon supping in my chamber, nor could I find any pretext for refusing him. But when his majesty had retired, I dismissed the rest of the company; and no sooner was I alone than I eagerly broke the seal of my letter, which again bore the impress of the arms of the de Brissacs.

No, madam, I will not grant you what you have the courage to demand of me. What, cease to love you? Ah, cease then to show yourself so worthy of my love. I

shall cherish your dear image during my life, and in death my last thoughts will be yours. To-morrow I shall throw myself at your feet; and should you forbid me your door, I will not answer for the consequences. Remember, that the overwhelming passion which consumes me renders me desperate enough even for crime. Adieu, my beloved; I love you spite of fate. Adieu, but only until to-morrow.

Farewell, farewell.

This letter was ill calculated to restore me to reason, and throughout the night my only occupation was to read it over and over again. Sometimes I turned my thoughts towards Madame de Cossé, whom I strove to banish as quickly as possible from my memory, feeling very certain that my conscience would never allow me to indulge my love for the husband, whilst the image of the noble and confiding wife rose between him and me. At length I succeeded in banishing her from my thoughts. I remembered only the eternal tenderness promised me, and my own conviction of perfect happiness in the possession of such a love. Certainly a sincere and reciprocal love has treasures of peace and joy beyond calculation.

I arose on the following day with restored health and spirits, and received the many who crowded to solicit favours of me, in the most amiable and obliging manner. As I was conducting out of the room a noble lady of Bretagne, who had been soliciting some vacant post in my establishment, I saw in one corner of the salon a female sitting down. It was the Duchesse de Cossé. At the sight of her my knees trembled, and I sank into a chair; we were quite alone. She rose, and approaching me, said:

"Will you favour me with a short audience? I must speak with you."

"You may command me, madam," answered I, trembling; "you have every right to do so."

"Well, then," replied she, with a manner as little assured as my own, "forbid all interruption during our conversation."

I rang, and gave orders that no person should be permitted to enter the apartment in which we were. How greatly did the presence of Madame de Cossé disquiet me! I, who possessed the royal favour, and who generally boasted so much self-possession, who was a woman of the world, became all at once metamorphosed by the violence of my passion into a weak, timid creature, a mere school-girl. The duchess was not, evidently, more at her ease; nevertheless, she was the first to break the embarrassing silence which ensued.

"You are doubtless surprised, madam," said she, "to see me here, but I was anxious to see you, to reassure you, and to restore to you the repose of which you have deprived me—you love my husband?"

"I, madam?"

"Yes, you; nor can you deny it. I love him likewise. I look upon him as the best and most excellent of men; and, until yesterday, I entertained not a doubt that his heart was all my own. You have cruelly undeceived me, but I come not to reproach you; the evil is done. Speak to me only with candour, and answer my question, whether you really love my husband?"

"But too well," answered I, blushing.

"I am sorry for it, for all our three sakes," answered the duchess; "but no matter; 'twas not to excite your commiseration for myself I came hither. I wished to tranquillize you; be assured that not one word on the subject will escape my lips."

So much generosity startled and humiliated me. I would have spoken to the duchess of my sorrow and

repentance, of the letter which I had written to her husband, but she did not give me the opportunity; for as she finished speaking, she curtsied, and left me.

Scarcely had she quitted the castle than her husband entered my apartment. I related to him the visit of the duchess, and the kindness with which she had conducted herself. He seemed touched by my recital, and I availed myself of that favourable opportunity to urge him to renounce his love for me, and to return to his amiable partner. In vain: my prayers and entreaties were alike fruitless. The duke appealed to my own heart, and soon made me resume my natural feelings. I had indeed spoken truly, when I assured him in my letter that I should always love him.

What else remains to be told concerning it will be found in its proper place in the continuation of these pages. Well and nobly has M. de Cossé ever conducted himself towards me. He was not less constant and faithful in my reverse of fortune than was the Duc d'Aiguillon. This latter is no more, but M. de Cossé still lives; and I trust that both of us will grow old together. Grow old! What a word! How full of gloomy and painful ideas! Still to grow old is to live; and life is dear to all of us.

CHAPTER XIV

HIS MAJESTY IS BORED

There was a time when I had cause to be very anxious, had I not been otherwise absorbed. The king was bored to death, and became daily more dull and heavy. I saw his gloom without knowing how to disperse it, yet it did not make me particularly uncomfortable. Occupied with my dear Duc de Brissac, I almost forgot his majesty for him. The Maréchale de Mirepoix, who had more experience than I had in the affairs at Versailles, and who knew the king well, was alarmed at my negligence, and spoke to me of it.

"Do you not see," she said, one day, "what a crisis is at hand? The king is dying of ennui."

"True."

"Does it not alarm you?" said the maréchale. "Think well when I tell you that your mortal enemy has seized on Louis; your most redoubtable enemy, ennui!"

"Very well; but what would you have me do?"

"You must amuse him."

"That is easier said than done."

"You are right, but it has got to be done. Believe me, kings are not moulded like other men: early disgusted with all things, they only exist in a variety of pleasures; what pleases them this evening will displease them to-morrow; they wish to be happy in a different way. Louis is more kingly in this respect than any other. You must devise amusements for him."

"Alas!" I replied, "how? Shall I give him a new tragedy of la Harpe's,—he will yawn; an opera of

Marmontel,—he will go to sleep. Heavens! how unfortunate I am!"

"Really, my dear," replied the maréchale, "I cannot advise you; but I can quote a powerful example. In such a case, Madame de Pompadour would have admitted a rival near the throne."

"Madame de Pompadour was very amiable my dear," I replied, "and I would have done so once or twice, but the part of Mother Gourdan does not suit me; I prefer that of her young ladies."

At these words the maréchale laughed, whilst I made a long, grave face. At this instant Comte Jean entered, and exclaimed:

"Really, ladies, you present a singular contrast. May I ask you, sister, what causes this sorrow? What ails you?"

"Oh, brother!" was my response, "the king is dying of ennui."

"That is no marvel," said my brother-in-law.

"And to rouse him," I added, "it is necessary, the maréchale says, that I must take a pretty girl by the hand, and present her to the king with these words: 'Sire, having found that you grow tired of me, I present this lady to you, that you may amuse yourself with her.'"

"Ah! my dear," said he, with a theatrical tone, "I see the dire necessity, and submit to it unrepiningly. Let us yield to fate, or rather, let us so act as to make it favourable to us. The king requires some amusement, and let us find him someone. We must take heed not to present any fine lady: no, no; by all the devils——! Excuse me, maréchale, 'tis a habit I have."

"It is nature, you mean," replied the maréchale. "The nightingale is born to sing, and you, Comte Jean, was born to swear. Is not that true?"

"*Morbleu*, madam, you are right."

After this conversation the maréchale went out, and Comte Jean departed to arrange his plans for the king's amusement.

Whilst my honoured brother-in-law, like a faithful subject, was seeking a toy for the king's amusement, I also endeavoured to find a means of diverting him. I had heard of a celebrated singer, who had retired from the opera; he was very old, but Louis had been much attached to him in his day, and he still preserved the freshness of his voice—I mean Chassé; who, although noble, had taken to the boards as much from love of pleasure as aversion from poverty. He had obtained great success as an actor and singer, and the folly of women had added not a little to his reputation.

Chassé had his intrigues, and enjoyed the singular glory of having caused a duel between two women. A Polish woman fought a Frenchwoman in the Bois de Boulogne on his account; our country-woman was wounded. After her recovery she was shut up in a convent, and the Pole received an order to quit the country. Chassé remained at home during the time this affair was rife, like a woman who has been fought for by two adorers; he thus received the visits of those who came to compliment him. The king sent him a message by the Duc de Richelieu, desiring him to terminate this parade. Chassé replied:

"Tell his majesty that it is not my fault, but that of Providence, which has made me the most amiable man in the kingdom."

"Know, vagabond," replied the Duc de Richelieu, "that you are only third in consideration; the king comes before you, and I after the king."

One day, at the first performance at the Comédie Française, Chassé came, but had forgotten his admission ticket. The person at the door, who did not know him,

refused to let him enter. The singer insisted, grew angry, and at length said :

" Sir, I am Chassé from the opera."

" Very well," replied the man, " and you shall also be *chassé* (driven away) from the Comédie Française," and shut the door in his face.

Such was the personage whom I was advised to produce to the king. I did not foresee the slightest difficulty, and wrote to engage him to come and sing at my house at a supper I was about to give to his majesty. My surprise was not small when I received the following letter, sealed with armorial bearings :

Madame la Comtesse, — I have received your invitation ; I beg of you to accept the assurance of my regret at being unable to obey your request. As a gentleman and pensioner of the royal academy of music, I cannot sing at the table of private persons without compromising myself. You will, I am sure, agree with me on reflection. In spite of my ardent desire to merit your patronage, I shall not quit my house but at the express desire of the king, who is my sovereign lord both as a noble and an actor. If his majesty wishes to hear me, as soon as I learn his pleasure I shall obey his mandate, happy to contribute to his pleasure and yours.

I am, etc., etc.

The Duc d'Aiguillon was with me when I received this, and thought it exceedingly impertinent.

" I hope," he said, " that you will not give yourself any more trouble about this creature."

" Not so," I replied ; " I will not be disappointed. The creature must come."

I sent for the Duc de Vrillière, and desired him to write a *lettre de cachet* to Chassé, the actor, desiring him to hold himself in readiness to sing on the morrow at a supper

which the king was to have at the Comtesse du Barri's. This letter was carried to Chassé, who assured the bearer of his obedience.

He came next day; he was a fine old man, and as lively as a young abbé. He wore a splendid dress of red velvet, embroidered and ornamented with brass buttons; his wig was splendid; M. de Sartine's head was not more becomingly decorated. He sang, and I was delighted at his voice, still full, sustained, and melodious. The king listened to him with pleasure; and when he had concluded, asked him how old he was.

"Sire, I am seventy-six," was the reply.

"You are a prodigy! your voice has not altered in the least."

"Sire," replied the actor, with a tone and look of pride, "all my person is like my voice."

"I rejoice to hear it," replied the king; "I wish I could say as much."

The king did not make Chassé any present; these gracious words were his sole recompense. They would have been his only reward, had I not sent him a gold snuff-box in the name of the king.

Notwithstanding all this, Louis continued still bored, when one morning Comte Jean came to me.

"Make yourself easy, sister," said he, "I have good news for you; I have found the person we want, and I have something for Frerat (our nickname for the king) that will renew his appetite."

"Who is this new wonder?" I asked, with a disdainful air.

"A little creature, not so handsome as you, but very pretty."

"Her name?"

"Ursule Noblin. She is very virtuous, but devotes herself to serve her brother, who is sentenced to death."

"What," I exclaimed, "would you present to his majesty the sister of a brigand?"

"The young man is not a robber. Meeting with a man of some rank in the streets he would not give up the pavement to him, and received a blow, to which he replied by a blow of his cudgel which knocked the other dead on the ground. You see it is a pardonable case. I have spoken to Father Noblin, and promised to save his son's life if he will resign his daughter to us. Young Ursule wept, but she loves her brother, considers the honour of her family, and has consented to follow me to the Parc-aux-Cerfs, where I have left her."

In consequence of an intimation from Comte Jean, Chamilly went to see this young lady, whom he found very handsome, and made her eulogiums to the king. Louis went to the Parc, and was delighted with Ursule. It was not, however, without difficulty that he paid his court, and he saw plainly that his victim was no voluntary sacrifice.

It was next necessary to rescue the unfortunate brother from the hands of justice. My brother-in-law took this upon himself; he desired Chon to speak to the chancellor: he, however, wishing to be urged, replied at first by a downright "No." Comte Jean, enraged, went to M. de Maupeou; he reproached him indignantly with his lack of regard for what I desired. After some words on both sides, M. de Maupeou complained of having lost my good graces.

"Whose fault is that?" asked my brother-in-law.

"Mine, perhaps," replied M. de Maupeou; "perhaps hers. Prevail on her to listen to me, and we may probably come to terms. I can assure you that I am at all times her devoted servant."

"And her good relation," added Comte Jean, spitefully; "but be that as it may, I will undertake to say

that my sister shall listen to you, provided that you bring to her the pardon of Noblin in due form."

M. de Maupeou knew very well that if he refused me I should apply to the king; he had no desire to combat with me, but rather wished to regain my friendship: he sent me word, therefore, by my brother-in-law that he would wait upon me, and I awaited him with much impatience.

The good apostle arrived with an air half serious, half jesting. After two or three words of politeness he gave me the liberating parchment sealed with the State seal, and that in a manner so calm, as if it were the most indifferent thing in the world: he would, I believe, have brought me an order for execution with the same apathy. The main thing for him was an excuse for presenting himself to me. I received him with an air of dignity.

"My lovely cousin," said he, "will you frown at me all my life?"

"I, monseigneur!" was my reply; "I know too well the respect due to you."

"It is not to your respect I pretend, but your friendship, cousin; and I think I have some claims on that."

"Really," I replied, with a haughty tone, "I did not believe you cared about it."

"Those who told you so, lied; I am guilty—not towards you, but towards those who make use of you against me. I am guilty, because I do not think that the Duc d'Aiguillon will ever make a good minister of war, and because I am decidedly of opinion that the Abbé Terray will make a detestable chancellor."

"The Abbé Terray chancellor! What do you mean?"

"In truth," said de Maupeou, "it is singular; but they are seeking to make it true. This man, the ruin of France, thinks, that to escape the galleys, he must hide himself beneath my robe. It is not mentioned to you in

precise terms, but yet it is no less the fact; but I here swear to you, madam, that I will die at my duty. They cannot charge me with felony, and my only crime is in having too well served my king."

"Indeed, cousin, you tell me strange news."

"This is nothing," added the chancellor. "I will tell you more when you are fully reconciled to me; to-day I will not disclose another syllable. He who guides you means well, but he is deficient in brains; he is angry with me, because I advised him to be content with the *portefeuille* he already holds. May heaven preserve him even that. As to you, cousin, be assured that they who flatter you most are not those who love you best; and if ever your fall should occur, it will be caused by those whom you least mistrust."

I begged the chancellor to explain; he refused, promising me, however, to tell me all at another interview, which I appointed for the next day.

I went myself to the Parc-aux-Cerfs with the pardon of Noblin, and gave the girl the important paper, which she pressed to her bosom with enthusiasm mingled with grief. "This favour has cost me dear," said she. "No matter; I would have bought it with my life's blood; my sin will be forgiven. I owed myself to my brother and my family, and now I am happy."

Here the poor girl wept. I endeavoured to console her, but in vain: I left her without having succeeded. At a subsequent period, when I inquired after her, I learnt she was dead. Oh, heaven! if my fears were founded. Shame will sometimes urge a virtuous heart to crime.

According to our arrangement the chancellor sent me word that he awaited me at my sister-in-law's, whither I hastened. Chon would have left us, but I said:

"No, sister, stay, if monseigneur has no objection."

"None at all," replied the chancellor. "Mademoiselle du Barri is devoted to you, and honours me with the title of friend; let her stay if you please. Besides, I shall not be sorry at the presence of a third party to impress on you the importance of the communication I am about to make to you."

We sat down on a sofa, and the chancellor, leaning on the chimney-piece, began by asking my opinion of the Prince de Condé.

"Indeed," I replied, "this prince is a brave man in battle, but that is nothing, with the name he bears. His conduct, however, latterly, has not raised him highly in my esteem. I think he has more talent than frankness, and more egotism than disinterestedness."

"Well, madam, and your opinion of the Comte de la Marche?"

"As to him, his friendship has cost me dear; but, in general, friendship is not cheap at Court. He is amiable in a drawing-room, I know not what he would be at the head of affairs."

"Wonderful! And the Prince de Soubise?"

"Oh, as to him, heaven in forming him only forgot to give him brains and heart; except these, he is perfection. But tell me, M. de Maupeou, are you going to catechize me upon all the courtiers?"

"No, madam, I only wished for your opinion on these three personages. Learn that, thanks to the pains of the Princesse de Marsan, they have united to drive out the real minister, to drive you from Court, and to put in your place a woman on whom they can depend."

"What!" I exclaimed, with more astonishment than anger, "has the Comte de la Marche, who is wholly devoted to me, joined in this plot?"

"Ah, my dear cousin," replied the chancellor, "you are always the same; for ever for or against, this way or

that, without reason or motive. Believe me, the Comte de la Marche is no better than others. If he has been faithful to you for any time, it is because it has not been his interest to betray you ; now he sees a chance of profit, and does not hesitate to range himself under the enemy's banner."

"What a villainous country, and what villainous people!" I exclaimed; "but before I become angry I wish to be convinced of what you assert. Have you any proof, or is it but simple conjecture?"

"Madam," replied the chancellor, taking out a paper, "I have a proof; behold it. It is a letter which the Comte de la Marche wrote to the Prince de Soubise, and which he left at little Cleophile's, who gave it to me."

"Ah, cousin!" said I, "you complain of the demoralization of the Court, you groan over the passions which reign there, and yet you gallantly pay attentions to the mistress of another man."

"You are mistaken," replied the chancellor; "it is not I who am on terms with Cleophile, but one of my people, who has influence with her ; one of my secretaries, a good-looking fellow, named Delbose, who allies diplomacy and love very well, and whilst he transacts his own affairs is careful of ours. Such a service deserves a recompense ; and when a member of my parliament is suspended I shall give his post to Delbose, who deserves it."

The chancellor gave me the Comte de la Marche's letter, which he begged me to read aloud. It substantiated in every point all he had been telling me, and was conclusive proof of the duplicity of those whom I had regarded as my friends.

As I advanced with this letter my voice became changed. The perfidy of the Comte de la Marche was death to me ; I had preferred him to the Princes de Soubise and de Condé. I remembered his base flatteries and cajoleries ;

epithets of the most vituperative kind escaped my lips one after the other, the spontaneous production of my rage. My sister-in-law was no less indignant than myself. As for the chancellor, he looked at us in turns with a cool glance, whilst a smile of contempt played on his pallid lips. At last he said to me :

" Do you believe now that I am more your enemy than the author of this letter ? "

" I have a great mind to continue my enmity with you, but I am compelled to confess, that in working for your own interests you have served mine."

" Wonderful ! " said M. de Maupeou. " Let us cease to be at cross purposes ; my advice will be useful to you."

" Why do you not run with d'Aiguillon ? "

" Because he runs to his ruin ; and because, according to our agreement, I must leave the ministry when he does. I save myself in saving him."

And so saying, the gallant chancellor took my hand and kissed it.

The Duc d'Aiguillon had heard of the plot of these princes. He was fully persuaded that M. de Maupeou guided these persons privately : he attempted to speak against them to the king, and was cut short at his first sentence. " Duc d'Aiguillon," said the king, " I am sorry that a good understanding no longer subsists between yourself and M. de Maupeou ; but, to prevent all attempts you may make against him, I warn you that I consider his services as highly as yours. He has made me king of France ; to the present time my predecessors and I were only the humble servants of the parliaments ; he has destroyed them as Cardinal de Richelieu destroyed the lords of the feudality. My posterity will owe no less to the chancellor than they will to the cardinal ; and, in fact, so long as I am king, so long will M. de Maupeou be chancellor."

The Duc d'Aiguillon endeavoured in vain to disguise the secret chagrin which these words of the king caused. He would fain have answered but could not, and therefore took his leave.

When we were alone the king said to me :

" I know not how to account for this difference between him and the chancellor. I like him, and so does every one else. Those who formerly ranged themselves with him against the parliaments are now opposed to him ; the Duc and the Abbé Terray seem to pull together."

" True, sire," I replied, " I know as well as you do the people you mention."

" What do you know of them ? " said Louis, turning red, " I named no one."

" Oh, you need not name them ; I have my police, and am instructed as well as your majesty with all that passes."

" Well, then, whom do you suspect ? "

" De Soubise, de Condé, and de la Marche. Am I wrong ? " The king was silent. " Yes, sire, these three gentlemen would fain become the regency of this realm. And if you do not believe me, look, sire ; read this letter from the Comte de la Marche to the Prince de Soubise."

The king took the letter and read it, and I took it from him as he said :

" I only see in this a natural desire to serve me ; a laudable ambition ; the letter is written in good terms. The only thing amiss is the improper reference to you, whom they ought to respect for my sake ; otherwise I see nothing to complain of."

" This is very fine," said I ; " I know now how far I may depend upon your protection ; you would see me torn to pieces before you would interfere, so that your own personal safety was not compromised. However, be satisfied, I will defend myself without your assistance ;

and henceforward I will never quit my chamber without a brace of pistols in my belt."

"Come, come," replied Louis, "you look upon things in a wrong light. Can you suppose that I would suffer you to be attacked with impunity?"

"How do I know? You are so compassionate, that you fear to hurt even those who are ready to murder me."

"Be assured," answered the king, "that I will defend you with my life. My ministers must take care of themselves; their safety is their own business and not mine."

The last remark was unanswerable, and I was silent.

I next sent to request Madame de Valentinois to come to me immediately; and, in a long *tête-à-tête*, I explained to her my reasons for being dissatisfied with the Prince de Condé, requesting, at the same time, she would come to an explanation with her sister-in-law, Madame de Monaco. I charged her further, to apprise this lady, that if she continued to give me cause for displeasure I should embrace every opportunity of creating a misunderstanding between his majesty and the prince; that I should infallibly succeed in so doing, and in that case the prince would find himself most disagreeably situated between the public, who would repulse his advances, and the Court, who refused to acknowledge him. Madame de Valentinois repaired to her sister-in-law, and repeated what I had said. In pursuance of all these reflections she managed so well as to divert the Prince de Condé by degrees from the prosecution of his plan, till at length he wholly forgot it.

As for the Comte de la Marche, I avenged myself for his perfidious conduct by the marked contempt with which I treated him whenever I by chance encountered him; nor did M. de Soubise meet with more lenient treatment. I took particular delight in annoying him

upon all occasions; sometimes by various tricks well played off against him, and sometimes by smart observations and pointed remarks upon various passages of his private life; but the most decided proof of my ill-will towards him was shown in seeking, by every means, to injure Prince Louis de Rohan, his kinsman, our ambassador at Vienna.

CHAPTER XV

THE KING DIES

MEANWHILE the period for the marriage of the Comte d'Artois to Marie Therese of Savoy was fast approaching. The young prince eagerly anticipated its arrival as the signal for his emancipation. The careful watchfulness of those around him was insupportable to one of his violent and impetuous disposition.

Louis XV was exceedingly partial to the Comte d'Artois, followed his youthful indiscretions with the sincerest anxiety, and whilst affecting openly to blame his lovesick fancies, would laugh in private at them.

The ceremony took place on the 16th of October. Hitherto, the stern rules of etiquette had regulated all such occasions, but the present joyful event was celebrated with a burst of general feeling and unrestrained delight which must have been highly gratifying to the youthful pair who were principally concerned in it. The prince had at all times evinced the utmost kindness and politeness towards me, and I most heartily concurred in wishing him every possible happiness.

I shall ever recall with pleasure the royal banquet. I was seated (not at table, etiquette did not permit that), but opposite his majesty. I was in the full possession of my good looks, if I might believe the envious glances directed to me by the several duchesses present. It has been asserted that I wore, on that memorable day, diamonds to the value of five millions; that, however, is an exaggerated statement, their utmost value was three millions. My dress was composed of cloth of gold, trimmed

with roses tied together by bows of diamonds; each of my ear-rings cost 100,000 crowns; my belt and head-dress were proportionately costly. The king, who was in raptures with my dazzling appearance, seemed scarcely able to gaze on any other object, and continued to converse with me by signs, to the great annoyance of the dauphiness, who always beheld me with dislike.

I forgot to mention in its proper place a trick which this princess played me, and which was long talked of in the castle, very probably for no other reason than because it was known to be unpleasant to me.

I had directed my jeweller to make me the most magnificent diamond aigrette ever seen. I know not who had the kindness to apprise the princess of the circumstance, but, however that may have been, when the jeweller came to bring me the elegant ornament he had made, he received orders to wait upon the dauphiness immediately, without waiting to see me or any person. When M. Lebon was introduced to the princess, she inquired whether he had not some trinket or other with him. M. Lebon, who suspected no harm, instantly displayed my aigrette, which the dauphiness extolled as very beautiful, and declared her intention of purchasing it. M. Lebon, who feared incurring my displeasure, replied that the article in question was not his to dispose of, but belonged to the Comtesse du Barri. "No matter," replied the dauphiness, "I shall keep it just the same, and the Comtesse du Barri can order another, for this one shall be mine."

Poor M. Lebon was compelled to retire in despair, and sent his son to inform me of what had passed. In a similar case Madame de Pompadour would have waged open war, would have complained to the king, and demanded vengeance at his hands; but I was careful to

avoid such a line of conduct, and contented myself with writing the following letter to the dauphiness :

Madam,—I have just learned that your royal highness has purchased of M. Lebon a diamond aigrette I had bespoke for myself. I am truly happy that the ornament pleased you, and only regret, not having presumed to suppose it might have been to your taste, that I might have enjoyed the gratification of offering it myself for your acceptance, as a small token of the respectful and sincere attachment, with which I am,

Your royal highness's most devoted servant,

Comtesse du Barri.

When the king was informed of the manner in which I had behaved in the affair he was quite charmed, and a few days after recompensed me for the sacrifice I had made, by presenting me with an aigrette composed of the finest Oriental rubies surrounded with large diamonds, and a necklace formed of four hundred pearls, each pearl weighing from four to five grains each. As for the dauphiness, directly she received my note she sent her page in waiting, M. de la Châtagueraie, to express her satisfaction at my complaisance. And thus terminated an affair, in which I venture to say I displayed a degree of sense so much the more praiseworthy as it was but little expected from me.

Louis XV continued equally kind and desirous of promoting my wishes as ever. I have already mentioned to you my little African, Zamor, then so lively, pleasing, and full of mirth. One day, after the king had been amusing himself with him, I said :

" Really, sire, you owe this entertaining little creature some mark of your royal favour."

" With all my heart," replied the king, " let me see,

what shall I do for him ? " He was thoughtful for a few moments, and then said, " I will appoint him governor of the Château de Luciennes, with a salary of 600 livres."

I thanked his majesty for this act of generosity, but added :

" With your permission, sire, I should wish to have the credentials necessary for entering upon this office regularly drawn up, and sealed with the State seal."

" That," replied the king, " is not my province, but belongs to the chancellor. You had better signify your wish to him."

" And that I will do," returned I, " and I doubt not M. de Maupeou will arrange things to my entire satisfaction."

Here I should like to mention an anecdote of the king. Louis XV was very fond of culinary affairs, and particularly interested in studying the various branches of the art of cooking. *Les Dons de Comus*, and *La Cuisinière Bourgeoise*, were his favourite volumes, and he knew them by heart. A head cook, whom I had lately engaged, coming one day to receive directions from me respecting a dinner I was about to give, at which some favourite dish of the king's was to be served up, Louis, who was with me at the time, began to explain to the man the most palatable and savoury manner of preparing it. The cook, who had no idea that he was in the presence of his sovereign, listened with enthusiasm for some time, and then exclaimed, " I see, sir, that you are a first-rate hand in our profession, and no doubt you receive excellent wages."

One day Louis announced that, with his own hands, he would prepare an omelette, and forbidding anyone to interfere with him, went away to a private kitchen to do so, while we all waited patiently to see what this royal

cook would produce. Besides several ladies, there were the Ducs d'Aiguillon and d'Ayen, and the Prince de Soubise. The omelette was brought to table, but burned in a terrible manner. The guests looked at each other with an air of consternation; nevertheless, Louis proceeded to help each person to it, and then, taking a part himself, he said, "It is rather burnt, to be sure, but still quite eatable."

I need not say that every one ate of this execrable omelette, but the stomach of a courtier is as much at his prince's disposal as his heart.

Louis supped almost every evening in my apartments. From the moment of his entering my dining-room he laid aside his royal dignity, and appeared only as a pleasing and convivial companion. He possessed every qualification to fit him for adorning the social board, an easy and graceful manner, exquisite taste and style, and an ever-ready attention to his guests; yet, spite of the endearing familiarity with which Louis XV comported himself, those noblemen honoured by his invitation to the repast observed the most respectful reserve. The king would by no means have liked that they should treat him less ceremoniously than usual; and, although he was pleased to divest himself for a while of the ensigns of power and forget his rank, he did not wish that others should do so too.

At these *réunions* perfect ease and freedom prevailed, and both sexes were permitted to express their thoughts in language, which, if not restrained by the stern hand of etiquette, was yet regulated by the strictest propriety. I alone submitted to no dictates but those of inclination, and giving free vent to my natural vivacity, kept the king incessantly amused with the arch and lively piquancy of my remarks or replies. Yet, greatly as my unstudied and open manners delighted the king, I am well assured he would not have tolerated them in any other female of the

Court. We frequently had supper parties, at which the number of guests varied from four to eight.

These suppers possessed an infinite attraction; a well-filled board, and the gayest yet most decent wit presided there. It was the hour for friendly converse, and one for obtaining from the monarch that which he would have unhesitatingly refused if solicited at a less propitious moment. But these suppers were equally fatal to all those persons who had made themselves obnoxious for any cause to those assembled; the opportunity thus afforded of injuring them in the opinion of the sovereign was so industriously employed that the offending parties were lost, beyond a hope of redemption; and one of the greatest helps towards the disgrace of the Duc de Choiseul was his refusing to attend them, that he might not be compelled to endure my presence likewise. I shall ever regret these delightful repasts. How very far are the grave and formal assemblies of the present day from equalling these charming parties. Nowadays cheerful conversation is at an end, and dry, gloomy discussion has taken its place. During the last four or five years politics have swallowed up every other topic. May heaven grant, for the sake of our grandchildren, that the present state of things may soon give place to those happier days I so justly deplore.

Louis XV was, as I have shown, extremely fond of free and unrestrained conversation; it seemed, indeed, the only thing which had power to divert his mind from the fatigues of royalty, or the many causes he had for uneasiness within his family, whom he well knew dealt out with a lavish hand their censures on his mode of life.

In proportion as he advanced in years his affection for his family appeared to decline, until at length he regarded his relations merely as heirs eager to strip him of his

possessions, and begrudging him the short period he had to spend upon earth. His daughters were not more liberally judged than his grandchildren; and although he made a practice of seeing the princesses every day, yet his visits seldom extended to more than a minute, and usually he had returned to his own apartments from his morning visit to Princess Adelaide, ere her sisters Sophie and Victoire had repaired to the appointed rendezvous; these hasty meetings were but little calculated to promote confidence or cement the bonds of family union. Good morning or evening, a broad joke, a familiar nickname, was all that ever passed.

In the evening the princesses, dressed in full Court costume, embroidered with gold or silver, came to return their father's visit; but frequently, with a view to economize time, they had neglected the elaborate style then in vogue of dressing their hair, so that the deshabille in which their heads appeared formed a ludicrous contrast with their rich velvet or brocaded dresses. This trifling communication was all that took place between the king and his daughters.

But in spite of the great hold I had on the king's love, there were moments when I experienced real bitterness. The *gouvernante* of the Parc-aux-Cerfs furnished me with a long account of the many visits paid by his majesty to her establishment. The fact was, the king could not be satisfied without a continual variety, and this passion, which ultimately destroyed him, appeared to have come on as he advanced in years. All these things created in my mind a state of extreme agitation and alarm, and, improbable as the thing appeared even to myself, there were moments when I trembled lest I should be supplanted by some fresh object of the king's caprice; and again a cold dread stole over me as I anticipated the probability of the health of Louis falling a sacrifice to the irregularity



(*W. F. Mansell photo.*)

MADAME SOPHIE, DAUGHTER OF LOUIS XV

From the painting by Nattier, at Versailles.

of his life. It was well known throughout the Château that La Martinière, the king's surgeon, had strongly recommended a very temperate course of life, as essentially necessary to recruit his constitution, wasted by so many excesses, and had even gone so far as to recommend his no longer having a mistress; this the courtiers construed into a prohibition against his possessing a friend of any other sex than his own. For my own part, I experienced very slight apprehensions of being dismissed, for I well knew that Louis XV reckoned too much on my society to permit my leaving the Court, and if one, the more tender, part of our union were dissolved, etiquette could no longer object to my presence. Still, the advice of La Martinière was far from giving me a reason for congratulation; but these minor grievances were soon to be swallowed up in one fatal catastrophe, by which the honours and pleasures of Versailles were for ever torn from me.

The *Madame* of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, fearing that some of the subordinate members of that establishment might bring me intimation of what was going on there without her cognizance, came one day to apprise me that his majesty had fallen desperately in love with a young orphan of high birth, whom chance had conducted within the walls of her harem; that to an extraordinary share of beauty, Julie (for that was the name of my rival) united the most insatiate ambition; her aims were directed to reducing the king into a state of the most absolute bondage, "and he," said madame, "bids fair to become all that the designing girl would have him."

Julie feigned the most violent love for her royal admirer, nay, she did not hesitate to carry her language and caresses far beyond the strict rules of decency. Her manners were those of one accustomed to the most polished society, whilst her expressions were peculiarly

adapted to please one who, like the king, had a peculiar relish for everything the reverse of decent or correct. His majesty either visited her daily or sent for her to the Château. I heard likewise from M. d'Aiguillon that the king had recently given orders that the three uncles and two brothers of Julie should be raised by rapid promotion to the highest military rank; at the same time the grand almoner informed me he had received his majesty's express command to appoint a cousin of the young lady's to the first vacant bishopric.

These various reports threw me into a train of painful and uneasy reflections. Louis XV had never before bestowed such marks of favour upon any *élève* of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, and the intrigue had attained this height with the most inconceivable rapidity. Chamilly interrupted my meditations, by presenting himself with an account of his having been commissioned by his majesty to cause a most splendid set of diamonds to be prepared for Mademoiselle Julie, the king not considering any jewels at present to be seen in the hands of the first jewellers of Paris worthy her acceptance. By way of finish to all this, I learned that two ladies, one of whom was a duchess, had openly boasted at Versailles of their relationship to Julie. This was a more decided corroborative than all the rest. Courtiers of either sex are skilful judges of the shiftings of the wind of Court favour, and I deemed it high time to summon my brother-in-law to my assistance, as well as to urge him to exert his utmost energies to support my tottering power.

My communication tormented Comte Jean as much as it did me; he proposed several means of combating this rising inclination on the part of Louis XV. I assented to whatever he suggested, and we set to work with an eagerness, increased on my part by a species of gloomy presentiment, which subsequent events but too fatally

confirmed. The Maréchale de Mirepoix, who, from being on good terms with every person, was sure to be aware of all that was going on, spoke to me also of this rival, who was springing up in obscurity and retirement; and it was from the same source I learned what I have told of the two ladies of the Court. She advised me not to abandon myself to a blind confidence, and this opinion was strengthened when I related all I had gathered upon the subject. But our hopes and fears were all soon to be forgotten in the dreadful event that came upon us like a cataclysm. The king was taken ill, and his physicians announced that he had smallpox.

Perhaps no person ever entertained so great a dread of death as Louis XV. When at last he was told the nature of his ailment it was, indeed, a death-blow.

To every person who approached him the despairing monarch could utter only the fatal phrase, "I have the smallpox," which, in his lips, was tantamount to his declaring himself a dead man. Alas! had his malady been confined to the smallpox, he might still have been spared to our prayers; but, unhappily, a complication of evils, which had long been lurking in his veins, burst forth with a violence which, united to his cruel complaint, bade defiance to surgical or medical skill.

Yet, spite of the terror with which the august sufferer contemplated his approaching end, he did not lose sight of the interests of the nation as vested in the person of the dauphin, whom he positively prohibited, as well as his other grandsons, from entering his chamber or even visiting the part of the Château he occupied. After this he seemed to divest himself of all further care for sublunary things; no papers were brought for his inspection, nor did he ever more sign any official document.

The next request was for his daughters, who presented themselves bathed in tears, took their stations beside their parent, and established themselves as nurses, an office which, I can with truth affirm, they continued to fill unto the last with all the devotion of the purest filial piety.

On this same day Louis caused me to be sent for. I ran to his bedside trembling with alarm. The various persons engaged in his apartment retired when they saw me, and we were left alone.

"My beloved friend," said the king, "I have the smallpox; I am ill, very ill."

"Nay, but sire," interrupted I, "you must not fancy things worse than they are; you will do well, depend upon it, and we shall yet pass many happy days together."

"Do you indeed think so?" returned Louis. "May heaven grant your prophecy be a correct one. But see the state in which I now am; give me your hand." He took my hand and made me feel his burning cheeks. I know not what effect this touch of my hand might have produced, but the king in his turn patted my face, pushed back the curls which hung negligently over my brow; then, inclining me towards him, drew my head upon his pillow. I submitted to this whim with all the courage I could assume; I even went so far as to be upon the point of bestowing a gentle kiss upon his forehead. But, stopping me, with a mournful air, he said, "No, my lovely countess; I am no longer myself, but here is a miniature which has not undergone the same change as its unfortunate master."

I took the miniature, which I placed with respectful tenderness in my bosom, nor have I ever parted with it since.

This scene lasted for some minutes, after which I was retiring, but the king called me back, seized my hand, which he tenderly kissed, and then whispered an affectionate "Adieu." These were the last words I ever heard from his lips.

CHAPTER XVI

BANISHED FROM COURT

THE news of the king's death was brought me by Comte Jean, who entered my chamber, saying :

" I understand the king is dead ; have you heard anything of it ? "

" Were the report correct," answered I, " I should have known it."

" Well, living or dead, I am advised to keep out of the way ; and this night will see me on my journey from Paris. Will you accompany me ? "

" No," replied I.

" There you are wrong ; for, depend upon it, a cloister will be your fate : at any rate, my business here is at an end. The new monarch is young, and attached to his wife."

My brother-in-law then requested I would furnish him with money. I gave him what I had, and placed in his hands diamonds to the value of 30,000 francs. He was very anxious to obtain all my jewels, under pretence of conveying them safely out of the kingdom, but this I was too wise to agree to ; he would have staked them at the first gaming-table he met with. We separated without much emotion on either side.

During the day several false reports arrived of the death of the king ; but at length, about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon, I received the following letter :

Madam,—You have lost your best friend and I an excellent master : at three o'clock this day his majesty

breathed his last. I can scarcely describe to you the horrors of his death-bed. The Princesses Adelaide and Sophie braved the frightful contagion to the last, and never quitted him till the last spark had flown. Alas! with the exception of themselves, every attendant openly expressed weariness and disgust.

For several days the physicians have forbidden the windows to be opened; and those condemned to inhale the pestilential vapours of the room vainly sought to counteract them by every powerful fumigation. Alas, madam, what is a king when he can no longer grasp the sceptre? How great a leveller is death! The prelates had abandoned the sick chamber, and left a simple curé of the chapel to take their place; the lords-in-waiting and other officers shrunk from the duties of their office, and, with their eyes fixed on a timepiece, eagerly awaited the hour which should free them from it. The princesses, who perceived this impatience, durst make no complaint, while the king, occasionally recovering his senses, uttered broken sentences, expressive of the religious terror which had seized his mind. At length, at a few minutes past three o'clock, Lemonnier, in his capacity of first physician, said, after laying his hand upon the heart of the patient, and placing a glass before his lips, "THE KING IS DEAD." *At these words all present strove with indecent haste to quit the chamber; not a single sigh, not one regret was heard. The princesses were carried insensible to their apartments.*

The extinction of a candle, which had been placed in a certain window, announced the accession of the dauphin ere the Duc d'Aumont had informed him of the decease of his august grandsire.

This letter wrung from me some bitter tears, as well for the king, who had so lavishly bestowed his affections upon me, as for myself. What would now be my fate?

Alas ! I knew not ; all my brilliant prospects were buried in the coffin of my late protector.

The Duc d'Aiguillon called on me about midnight ; he, as well as the other ministers who had been about the late monarch during his last illness, being prohibited by etiquette from following the present monarch to Choisy, whither the whole of the royal family had retired for a few days.

I had retired a few miles out to Ruel. No person came near us the whole of the day, with the exception of M. de Cossé, and I sat in hourly expectation of some order from Court. At length we descried a travelling carriage with six horses, proceeding at a rapid pace up the avenue. " I know that livery," exclaimed I ; " 'tis that of my humble adorer, my obsequious slave, my friend at Court, the Duc de la Vrillière, commonly called *le petit saint*. You see that the good soul could not delegate to another the pleasing task of arresting me."

M. Tartuffe was but a faint copy of *le petit saint* as he presented himself before me. His manners still retained part of their former servility, but there was a lurking smile about him, which proved how well he was pleased with the part he had to perform.

He approached me with lingering steps and an air of mysterious importance, while a sort of sardonic grin contradicted the sorrow he endeavoured to force into his countenance. For my own part, I caused the folding doors to be thrown open, and advancing ceremoniously, stood to receive the orders of the king. I bowed stiffly and silently ; and, with something like a malicious satisfaction, I witnessed the embarrassment into which my cool and collected manner threw him.

" Madam," said he at last, " I have a painful duty to perform : in a word, I am the bearer of a *lettre de cachet*."

" Well, sir ! " said I, tranquilly.

" Madam, I must request you to believe how greatly I regret the task imposed upon me; but my duty and obedience to the king——"

" Would enable you to strangle your nearest relative. All that is well known; but, in the name of all that is base, cowardly, and unmanly, could no one but *you* be found to remind a distressed and afflicted woman that she has lost her only friend and support ? "

" Madam, you outrage the king in my person."

" No, sir; I respect the king too highly to believe that there could ever be any relation between him and one who is too contemptible to remind me that he was but a few days back the most cringing of my servile slaves."

Le petit saint, boiling with rage, with an unsteady hand, unfolded and read, in a trembling voice, the following words:

Madame la Comtesse du Barri,—For reasons, which have for their object the preservation of the tranquillity of my kingdom, and the prevention of any State secrets confided to you being promulgated, I send this order for your immediate removal to Pont aux Dames, accompanied by one female attendant only, and under the escort of the exempt who has the necessary orders. This measure is by no means intended to be either disagreeable or of long duration. I therefore pray God to have you in his holy keeping.

(*Signed*) *Louis.*

" That, madam," continued the duke, " is his majesty's pleasure, and you have nothing to do but to submit."

" Your advice was not asked, my lord," returned I. " I honour and obey the king's slightest wish, but your presence is no longer requisite; you will therefore be pleased to rid me of it."

The duke, resuming his air of mock humility, bowed low, and departed.

When I was alone, I must confess a few tears escaped me, but I soon wiped them away; my resolution was taken.

The Duchesse d'Aiguillon and my friends hastened to question me relative to the duke's visit. I showed them the *lettre de cachet*, which confirmed the misfortune they had suspected from seeing Hamoul, who was to be my escort, waiting in the anteroom to conduct me to the abbey of Pont aux Dames, near Meaux, the place of my exile. They all evinced the utmost sorrow, and both Chon and my niece protested that, with the king's permission, they would willingly attend me in my seclusion.

We reached Pont aux Dames in the middle of the night. It was a miserable-looking place, which took its date from the time of Saint Louis or Charlemagne for aught I know. What a contrast met my eyes between this ruinous old building, its bare walls, wooden seats, and gloomy casements, and the splendour of Versailles or Choisy; all my firmness forsook me, I threw myself weeping into the arms of Geneviève.

A courier had announced my intended arrival, and I found all the good sisters impatient to see me. What eager curiosity did the pious nuns evince to behold one of whom they had heard so much even in their quiet retreat, and how many questions had I to reply to from those who had the courage to address me. Alas! I of all the throng assembled was the most anxious for quiet and solitude.

I was lodged in the best apartments, which, however magnificent the good people of Pont aux Dames might consider them, were not on a par with the granaries of Lucienne: but complaint was useless, and I could only resign myself to whatever was offered me.

The loss of my liberty far outweighed in my estimation the loss of my courtly honours, and, like a prisoned bird, to regain my freedom seemed the only aim and end of all my exertions. Love sought to console me by suggesting that henceforward no tie would interfere with my passion for M. de Cossé; but the very idea brought with it a torturing uncertainty, as to whether the duke might consider a poor, disgraced favourite still worthy of his love, as when she shared the honours of royalty. The question was too painful to be entertained, more especially in the state of desolation in which my misfortunes had placed me.

The Duc de Cossé was not the last to present himself at the grate of the convent. How justly had I estimated this excellent man, and well did his many noble and exalted virtues merit the pure and undivided love I bore him. Up to the present hour he has been my friend, my support, my consolation amidst all the trials and vicissitudes I have undergone; but my obligations to M. de Cossé are greater than this. The king only raised me to his throne, but M. de Cossé elevated me to a level with his own generous and exalted mind, by associating me in his virtuous and dignified sentiments.[1]

My exile at the convent was not of long duration, and by the sale of my hotel at Versailles I was enabled to

[1] The Duc de Cossé Brissac (Louis Hercule Timoléon) well deserved the high partiality with which Madame du Barri regarded him. Appointed in 1791 Commander-in-chief of the Constitutional Guard of Louis XVI, he was one of the most faithful defenders of the monarchy, and perished at Versailles in the ghastly massacre of September. After having long and courageously repulsed his assailants, he was cut down by a blow from a sabre. The gallant reply he made to some person, who had, previously to this period, been complimenting him upon his generous and loyal conduct, is well known: "I merely pay the debt I owe to the ancestors of my king and myself!" His bleeding head was brought to Madame du Barri, as a fearful intimation of what she had herself to expect.

purchase the estate of Saint Vrain, situated between Orleans and Paris.

Saint Vrain was a most delightful spot, with a magnificent garden, laid out in the English style, and adorned with statues, fountains, and cascades.

It was not without much regret I bade adieu to the kind sisterhood, whose friendly attentions had justly alleviated the weight of my griefs; but, with many expressions of goodwill, and a promise on my part of one day revisiting Pont aux Dames, I set out for my new residence.

I regulated my establishment upon a scale of elegance and comfort. My table, both at dinner and supper, was prepared for four-and-twenty guests, to whom I did the honours with ease and unaffected hospitality. The noble families of Saint Vrain did not disdain my society, but brought the female part of them to cheer my retirement. Vainly did they seek in me for the bold and shameless woman of intrigue they had been led to expect; vainly did they watch every word which escaped my lips, in expectation of hearing some of those coarse and vulgar sentiments ascribed to me by my enemies. They found a female touched and chastened by the hand of trial, into a character as quiet and subdued as though she had never seen a court.

My time passed smoothly and peacefully at Saint Vrain, where I frequently had the happiness of seeing the Duc de Cossé, who paid me many stolen visits. I was cheered also by the presence of my ever kind friends, the Duc and Duchesse d'Aiguillon, who, spite of every attempt to conciliate the new monarch, were sent into banishment and deprived of every post of honour.

I sincerely sympathized with the duke, whose haughty spirit writhed beneath the severity of the blow. Exiled to his duchy in Guienne, he was proceeding thither by

the way of Saint Vrain, where I received them with the warmest pleasure. The duchess had many claims upon my gratitude and esteem ; her many virtues, her constant kindness, and the heroic manner in which she flew to my succour upon the death of Louis XV, all deserved and had my tenderest and most respectful recollection.

But the seclusion of this country place soon bored me, and I obtained leave to return to my old estate. I was not long in availing myself of this permission, but quitted Saint Vrain with a full resolution of never revisiting it, and hastened to Luciennes, which seemed to me more delightful than ever. I shed tears of joy as I re-entered this enchanting abode, but its greatest charm to me was its vicinity to Paris.

The termination of my exile brought around me a crowd of friends, who had kept aloof before from a dread of displeasing the queen. My head grew giddy with the profusion of compliments I received, and when I saw myself once again surrounded by such a train of courtiers, I was tempted to believe the death of the king had been all a dream.

And thus the time passed, with nothing really worthy of remark, if I exclude the incessant Court intrigues of which I have already given more than enough examples.

In 1781 the king presented the queen with a diamond necklace, intended by his august grandsire for a certain Comtesse du Barri. This bijou was valued at 750,000 francs, and as I did not wish to purchase it on my own account, it remained, after the death of Louis XV, in the hands of the jeweller, who, not being able to dispose of it, took an opportunity of placing it in the way of the queen. Marie Antoinette, who was then pregnant of the dauphin, was greatly struck with the necklace, and constantly expressed her eager desire to become the possessor of it. The king, informed of her wishes, sent

for the trinket, which he contrived to place on the toilet of his royal consort at a moment when she was by no means expecting such an agreeable surprise. Still, some unaccountable caprice on the part of the queen made her refuse the so much coveted ornament, which ultimately became the commencement of that vile intrigue in which her majesty and Prince Louis de Rohan were engaged some years afterwards.

As I had some sort of interest in this necklace, I will relate something of what occurred, as I knew it. As was generally known, a deadly enmity existed between Cardinal Rohan and the queen, but about the middle and close of the year 1784 he appeared quite an altered man; his manners were improved and more cheerful, he seemed delighted with his present situation, and, at length, unable longer to conceal the secret which consumed him, he came to me one day and said:

"All has succeeded, and I am now perfectly reconciled to the queen."

"Upon my word, prince, I congratulate you, and that with so much the more sincerity, as what you tell me seems almost impossible."

"Oh, I have many ways of quieting the angry passions of your sex," said the cardinal, with an air of the most inconceivable conceit. "My influence over this *woman* is built upon a secure foundation. Do you know she has borrowed 100,000 crowns of me?"

"Of you?"

"That is to say, she has employed me to negotiate such a loan for her with certain wealthy bankers of my acquaintance."

"The more I hear the greater my surprise becomes——"

"I promise you it shall be redoubled before long, but you must preserve the strictest silence as to all I may communicate to you."

" Believe me," returned I, " I know too well the danger of breaking it."

" Comte de Cagliostro did not wish me to breathe a syllable to you; but old friends, you know, Madame la Comtesse——"

And here our conversation ended, leaving me perfectly stupefied at the inexplicable conduct of the queen; her reconciliation with one so shallow and presuming as the cardinal was at least a useless, if not a dangerous step; but the loan of 100,000 crowns baffled all my attempts to reconcile it with the high idea I had always entertained of the lofty and exalted principles of the queen.

About the month of March I heard much talk of the magnificent necklace, valued at 2,000,000 francs, which was now about to be sent by Bohemer, the jeweller, to Constantinople, he having vainly endeavoured to sell it to the king as a present for the queen, who refused to accept of it. Cardinal de Rohan was present when the affair was mentioned, and I perceived him look towards me and smile with a peculiar meaning, of which, as I did not comprehend it, I took not the least notice, nor did I recollect the next minute either what I had heard respecting the necklace, or the pantomimic gestures of the cardinal; but the very next time we were alone together (a thing which frequently happened, from his knowledge of the hours when I was generally to be found disengaged), he said:

" Bohemer's necklace is not destined to adorn the favourite sultana; it will not go out of France, for I have purchased it for the queen."

" And you have purchased this celebrated necklace for the queen's own use?"

" At the price of 1,600,000 francs, to be paid for by instalments, guaranteed by the hand of her majesty herself."

After particulars so minutely detailed, how could I (who, indeed, seldom troubled myself with much reflection) have for a moment supposed that the cardinal was the dupe of the greatest villainy you can conceive. I replied, however:

"What surprises me, prince, is, that you have not pressed for an interview with her majesty; it would be so much more agreeable for you personally to vindicate your character from the many charges laid to it."

The prince admitted the propriety of this observation, and a few days afterwards he showed me a note in the queen's own handwriting appointing a meeting with him in the gardens at Versailles, after midnight had struck.

I awaited his coming the next day with extreme impatience, and he soon arrived, even more joyful than he had been the preceding morning. "No more doubts, no more mistrust," exclaimed he; "my happiness is secure, I have both seen and spoken to the queen. She met me in the shrubbery which leads direct from the colonnade; but she had barely time to utter a few words, for madame and her sister approached us; I hid myself behind the bushes; no person either saw or heard me, and I am confident of being prime minister ere long; these Polignacs cannot hold out another month against the blows I am preparing for them; oh, my dear countess, one of the first uses I shall make of my power will be to restore to you what you have lost."

I was sitting alone on the 15th of August, about five o'clock in the evening, when a person entered, so pale, so trembling and agitated, that I could scarcely recognize the Baron de Sugère, to whom I had given permission at all times to call on me, that he might serve as a kind of Court gazette; for latterly he had procured sufficient interest to be presented at Versailles, and I, knowing how useful one of his prying disposition might be, aided him with all

my power. The 15th of August was the Feast of the Assumption, the very day on which the cardinal expected to receive such striking proofs of the queen's favour. Curious to know in what manner she would fulfil her royal pledge on this important day (for that she would keep an assurance once given I did not in the least doubt), I had requested the Baron de Sugère to pay his respects at Court, and to return to me and acquaint me with all that was passing. Alas! I was far from suspecting the real state of things.

"Mercy upon me, baron," cried I, as he entered, "what can have befallen you; has your carriage broken down on the road? or have you been attacked by thieves?"

"The Cardinal de Rohan, madam, is a ruined man! He has just been arrested by the king's command, dressed in his pontifical robes, and at the very foot of the altar," exclaimed the baron.

"The cardinal arrested!" repeated I, as if my mind could not receive the idea. "Why? What has he done?"

"He is suspected of having betrayed certain State secrets which had come under his knowledge, of having engaged in a conspiracy against the royal family, and of forming designs contrary to the peace and security of his majesty or his dominions."

"Tell me exactly what has happened," said I.

"The cardinal was waiting in the king's chamber the moment for attending mass, at which, I believe, he was to officiate, when he received a message from his majesty, requesting his immediate attendance in his private cabinet. The cardinal obeyed, and after a stay of about twenty minutes, came out with a flushed and angry countenance, and began to pace the gallery with an unsteady step. All at once Baron de Breteuil quitted his majesty's chamber, accompanied by the Duc de Villeroi,

captain of the guards, who, addressing an inferior officer near him, said, 'Follow his eminence, by the king's commands'; upon which the officer in question, M. de Jouffray, approaching the cardinal, told him he was his prisoner. The cardinal, pale as death, uttered not a syllable, but led the way to his apartment. Judge of our astonishment and curiosity; but as yet nothing can be learned of the motives of this extraordinary arrest. "At three o'clock, the Comte d'Agoult, chief of the brigade, informed the cardinal that he must go to Paris immediately."

In my salon that day all was gossip and wonder at this strange happening. The wildest rumours were current when, about ten o'clock, Madame de Cerneuil was announced. This lady was equally considered as very good authority in any case relative to the conduct of ministers, with most of whom, particularly the Baron de Breteuil, she was upon the most intimate terms. She allowed us to tell the all-engrossing story after our own version, and patiently waited till we had exhausted our comments upon it. At length, when all seemed weary with the discussion, she said, " Pray be under no fears for the Cardinal de Rohan's losing his head on the scaffold. I assure you he has a much greater chance of passing the rest of his life in the galleys. Prince Louis de Rohan, grand almoner of France, is now under arrest for stealing a diamond necklace."

These words, added to what I already knew, gave me at once an insight into the whole affair; meanwhile, Madame de Cerneuil proceeded to acquaint her attentive audience that Cardinal de Rohan had been arrested at the suit of Messrs Bosange and Bohemer, jewellers, for having, by means of a forged authority, obtained from them a necklace valued at 1,600,000 francs, which necklace had disappeared without their being enabled to trace its

destination. Madame de Cerneuil went on to relate particular after particular with so much minuteness of detail as to silence all inclination to rebut so formidable a charge against his eminence.

The next facts learned were the arrests of the principal instigators of the plot, the Comte and Comtesse de Cagliostro, M. de Villette, and Baron de Planta, one of the cardinal's most intimate friends, a man of the strictest honour, descended from one of the most ancient and honourable families in Switzerland. At length, however, truth pierced through the many attempts to conceal it, and the innocence of the queen was fully established, whilst that of the cardinal became much more equivocal, and all agreed that he must either have played the part of a rogue or a simpleton. To me it was evident enough that the agent in whom he had so much confided, Madame de la Motte Valois, had been making him her tool in obtaining possession of the necklace, which she had now confiscated to her own use. The only difficulty consisted in accounting for the various interviews which, according to the cardinal's account, had taken place between him and the queen, but this mystery was also cleared up, when a female named Olivia came forward and confessed that she had received a large sum from Madame de la Motte Valois for personating Marie Antoinette during several short meetings given to Cardinal de Rohan in the gardens of Versailles. This last explanation cleared up everything, for as to the conversations reported to have passed between himself and her majesty, I could easily imagine they had their origin in his own imagination alone, with a view to obtain my more ready belief of his wondrous tale.

The cause took the usual course, and the cardinal was declared innocent of all offence, except that of presumption in believing himself reinstated in the queen's

favour, while the Comtesse de la Motte Valois was sentenced to be flogged, branded, and confined for life in some strong prison. The former part of the sentence was duly executed, but the latter was evaded by the lady's making her escape to England, where, if I mistake not, she still resides.

I heard from various channels of the deep regret with which the queen learned the termination of the affair, as regarded the cardinal, whose audacity in coupling her name with his she would fain have seen severely punished. Her tears and entreaties, however, determined Louis XVI to visit such conduct with his severest displeasure, and he accordingly deprived the cardinal at once of the office of grand almoner of France, and his order of the Holy Ghost, banishing him to his *Abbaye de la Chaise Dieu* in Auvergne, but afterwards permitting him to retire to his bishopric of Strasbourg.

CHAPTER XVII

AN AFFAIR OF JEALOUSY

One morning early I was surprised by a visit from the Baron de Sugère, whom I had believed safe at his estate at Orleans. Wishing the disagreeable man anywhere else, I was yet compelled to welcome him to Luciennes, and to inquire to what cause I might attribute the honour of his visit.

"Madam," replied he, "thank God, I have no personal motives but those of friendship. I am rich, and want neither place nor pension. I enjoy myself my own way, and seek the society of my friends that I may rejoice with them at their misfortunes, or condole with them at their good fortune; that is, I mean—bless me, madam, I hardly know how to explain myself."

"Never mind, Monsieur le Baron," answered I, smiling, "the truth will escape sometimes in spite of you."

"Well, well! I see you are like the rest of the world, madam; you think me ill-natured and severe, when, on the contrary, I am of the kindest and most indulgent nature."

"Ah! my dear baron," cried I, "then you surely hate no one; for you treat all the world as friends."

"Do you think so? But I would ask you a little question—do you see much of the Duc de Cossé just now?"

"May I ask the reason of that question ere I answer it?"

"Simply because I believe the greater part of his time is taken up with a pretty creature called Céline?"

"And who is Céline?" said I, losing my gaiety as I asked the question.

"Dear me! do not you know her? She is the daughter of the woman who lets out the chairs at St Sulpice. She so captivated the Abbé de Boisgelin that he took her at once under his care and protection. The Marquis de M—— carried her off from the poor abbé, who complained bitterly of this injustice; a cry in which all the clergy joined the more unanimously as they agreed that Céline, being the daughter of an ecclesiastic (her father was a beadle), she belonged of right to the Church, whose property she was."

"Well, but what is all this to me?"

"Nothing certainly; but condescend to listen a few minutes. The Abbé Terray was determined to avenge his own fraternity, and offered such dazzling terms that the marquis was cut out in his turn. But he, in his turn, had to give place to the tempting offers of the Farmer-general Soulot; who was forsaken, after a time, for a lieutenant in a regiment of infantry, who stripped her of all the wealth her former lovers had bestowed upon her, and treated her most cruelly. Disgusted with love, and grown wise by experience, she determined upon a reformation: that is to say, she loves no one, and deceives those who love her; and these principles are now so firmly fixed in her, that she will go any length in the execution of their suggestions."

"And the Duc de Cossé visits her?"

"He is her constant shadow—never leaves her but when quite compelled. I really pity you; his acquaintance must have been so very agreeable for you——"

"And who presumes to say I do not still continue to enjoy it?" inquired I, with a haughty tone. "The duke is my friend, whom I am in the habit of seeing continually. But you, my good sir, have taken for granted

what was merely intended as a joke upon your credulity."

The baron was about to reply, when company was announced; and the entrance of several visitors, among whom was the Duc de Cossé, put an end to all further conversation on the subject.

Let whoever pleases endeavour to solve the riddle of the human heart, it is a task far above my philosophy. Yet let me honestly confess that the information I had just received of the infidelity of M. de Cossé stung me to the quick, although I well knew my own conduct had not been such as to warrant my exacting inviolable constancy from him. Still, a feeling of rage and mortification filled my soul, as though in bestowing his tenderness upon others he was defrauding me of what was exclusively my right. In vain did I seek to free myself from the crowd of tedious and uninteresting persons, in order to remove to the part of the room where M. de Cossé was seated; not once could I succeed in catching his eye, till just as I had resolved upon crossing the salon, in order to request his attendance in my boudoir, I saw him rising as though to take his leave. My first impulse was to command him to stay, but as I could not have commanded myself sufficiently to do it with a steady voice, I feared the possibility of bringing down upon me the attention of the company and perhaps paving the way for some ridiculous scene, and therefore contented myself with coolly returning his parting bow.

I gave, on this trying day, a large dinner to a crowd of foreigners, courtiers, and men of letters, and I was peremptorily called upon to forget my own feelings in order to do the honours of the table. Spite of all my attempts to play my part well it would not do; and after many ineffectual attempts at forcing my spirits, I was compelled to avail myself of the hackneyed excuse of severe

headache as a pretext for indulging in my own sorrowful reflections. One thing I resolved upon, that, until fresh particulars should transpire, I would not apprise the duke of what I already knew ; and suddenly an idea arose in my mind, which, as it presented the means of satisfying my doubts and avenging myself, should they be effectually confirmed, helped to dissipate my sorrow, and almost consoled me for the pain I was suffering.

Just as dinner was nearly over Geneviève entered the room, and informed me that a person who had just arrived from Paris begged to speak with me that very instant, and was awaiting me in the adjoining boudoir.

I rose from the table, and, begging Madame de Monaco to take my place, repaired to the chamber where my visitor awaited me. At the first glance a cry of emotion escaped me, for it was no other than Comte Jean du Barri who stood before me ; he whom I would have wished in Siberia rather than Paris, met my gaze, as I looked towards the table at which he was sitting. My brother-in-law approached, and, saluting me with his accustomed gallantry, exclaimed :

" How is this, my fair sister ? Terrified at the sight of me ? Am I to construe your agitation as a token of joy or sorrow ? "

" I did not expect you—your coming is so unlooked for," faltered I.

" Yes, yes ; I perceive," answered Comte Jean. " I have just returned from making the grand tour, have been all over Europe, where many a time I have said with the poet :

" ' On ne vit qu'à Paris et on végète ailleurs.'

" No, *viva* Paris, say I, dear, delightful Paris, where one can always find persons of sense to amuse one, fools and simpletons to convert to profit and advantage, and pretty women to reward your toils when they are over."

"Still the same, Comte Jean; you will never change, I think."

"Any more than yourself, my good sister-in-law. Do you know you look more beautiful than ever? Why, upon my soul, to bury you here in all the splendour of your beauty is nothing short of positive murder. I'll tell you what, my pretty countess, there is a mine of gold in those bright eyes, and if you will only aid my plans I will prove my words."

"You are pleased to flatter me," replied I; "but indeed, I am satisfied to be as I am, and seek no further change."

"Come, come, this is downright folly; or has the death of old Frerat made you renounce the world and determine upon a reformation? You should look upon his loss with greater philosophy; imitate France, and join in the cry of *vive le roi*. France has accepted a new master, why cannot you do the same, and give a worthy successor to his august majesty."

"It will not be his grandson I shall select, at any rate," said I, laughing.

"And why not?" answered Comte Jean; "that is, if the thing were practicable. But there are other persons in the world besides Louis XVI, and if you are docile and willing to be conducted in the right road, I have already several irons in the fire."

"Listen to me, Comte Jean," cried I, "you have already bartered me times enough. I have been used by you as an article of traffic, and either lent, sold, or exchanged, as best suited your interests or your humour; but I have regained my liberty, and am resolved to keep it."

"Oh, I see! the sweet melancholy of widowhood charms you, and its elegant sensibilities are very seducing with young ladies; but, my pretty sister, let me warn

you, that widowhood, like marriage, has its honeymoon, and that this moon once passed, ennui returns, and that is an enemy we must try to dislodge."

"Pray," said I, "is your brother Comte Guillaume dead?"

"Dead!" replied Comte Jean, "who the devil spoke of him? No! 'Tis of your royal widowhood I spoke. Come, come; have you no ambition?"

"I am very wretched."

"Softly, softly; for heaven's sake, do not seek to move me to pity."

"I wish but to relate to you my present cause of chagrin," said I, bursting into tears, "the Duc de Cossé has betrayed my confidence, he loves another!"

"The monster!"

"He is indeed unfaithful, and she whom he prefers to me is Céline."

"Céline!" cried Comte Jean, interrupting me; "stay, I should know the person you mean. She was called Javotte when the Abbé de Boisgelin took her to himself; Mademoiselle Albert, during the period of her acquaintance with the Marquis de Vaudreuil; Madame Laurent when the Abbé Terray honoured her with his addresses; and during the reign of the Farmer-general Soulot styled herself the Baronne de Merfleur; and when she forsook her plebeian lover for young d'Amblemiens, she assumed the appellation of Mademoiselle Céline."

"You seem wonderfully well acquainted with her history," said I. "His treachery has almost distracted me, and I must be avenged."

"Indeed," returned Comte Jean, "I see no harm in your amusing yourself according to your fancy, but I do not yet perceive in what way you propose doing so."

"My design," said I, "is to send to this fresh object of de Cossé's love some person who shall feign a passion,

which, by provoking a reciprocal feeling on the part of the fair one, shall supersede the ingrate, who thus rejects me, and plant in his heart the torturing pang of jealousy I now feel."

"And what if this mighty romantic scheme should not succeed? Really, sister-in-law, you seem still to consider yourself as queen of France, when all things bent to your will; but, for the present, leave the affair in my hands, and ere a fortnight shall have elapsed, you shall have all the satisfaction you desire; but first, let me have 200,000 francs."

"That I would do," answered I, "if you were not so well acquainted with the road to all the gaming-houses of Paris."

"An idea strikes me," cried Comte Jean, "but before I explain myself I must see Mademoiselle Céline; that I will do to-morrow morning; and at dinner-time you may expect me to give an account of my proceedings. Adieu, you are expected back to your friends, and I must return to Paris. I shall reserve the account of my adventures till our next meeting; *à propos*, have you 100 louis in your purse? I left mine in my dressing-room, and I have my vehicle to pay for."

I opened my secretaire and gave him the sum he required, which he received with joy; and hastily bidding me farewell, quitted the room, leaving me scarcely knowing whether to feel pleasure or pain from his visit. Upon the whole, my mind felt somewhat relieved by our late conversation, and I rejoined the company, radiant in smiles and renewed hope.

"Well, sister," said Comte Jean, when I next saw him, "I have just quitted Céline."

"And is she so very pretty?"

"Beautiful! charming!"

"I must doubt both your taste and common sense,"

retorted I, angrily; "but pray proceed, what did she say?"

"Why, she spoke much of you; and I easily found out that she was in the constant habit of seeing the Duc de Cossé. She seems very desirous of meeting you, who, by the way, she has never yet seen."

"An insolent creature! Perhaps she expects that I shall invite her to dine with me some day."

"I do not know; but at any rate I hope you will sup with her."

"Sup with her! Yes, if I may strangle her at the same time."

"Deuce take it, sister, how you talk; really jealousy and rage deprive you of your senses. We are permitted to sup with all, but the usages of society do not allow of our strangling any. Not but what I fully agree with you in considering it by no means honourable or creditable for you to take your seat at the table of so questionable a person as Céline."

"Then why advise such a step."

"Because the thing may be managed without in any way compromising you, without its ever being known that you have ever so far honoured your rival. My plan is this: I have told Céline that upon my return to Paris I was accompanied by a young relation, who had a most ardent curiosity to behold all the beauties of the day, and that I wished she would assist his desire. I mean you to play the part of my cousin."

There was something so romantically extravagant in all this that it caught my fancy immediately. The thoughts of deceiving Céline, while I enjoyed the triumph of betraying her infidelity to the duke, seemed to me the very refinement of malice, and the most piquant kind of revenge I could possibly take. I therefore closed with Comte Jean's suggestions, and, by the aid of a skilful tailor,

I was speedily supplied with a change of fashionable costume, hats, swords, buckles, etc., etc., with everything requisite for my new character. A perfect silence was observed on the subject, except towards Geneviève and Henriette.

Our plan was now fixed. I arrayed myself in my male costume, of which the following description may serve to convey an idea.

I wore a kind of loose trousers, embroidered silk stockings, shoes with red heels, a waistcoat of silver cloth, and a coat of chamois-coloured satin lined with blue, and lightly worked in silver; a cravat fastened by a diamond brooch completed my dress, to which may be added a hat ornamented with white feathers, and a golden-hilted sword. My hair was half curled and tied in an enormous bag. I really looked irresistible, at least so said my glass, and my two faithful friends Geneviève and Henriette.

However well I might have been satisfied with my appearance, my heart beat violently when the time came, as I thought of the possibility of my being recognized by my rival. Comte Jean sought to reassure me, and I was busily engaged listening to a comparison between myself and Gil Blas, whom Comte Jean protested I put him strongly in mind of, when the folding-doors of our apartment were thrown open, and Céline appeared. Her first glance was towards me, and as I returned her scrutinizing look, I felt myself grow pale with spite, for Céline was far more charming than I had been willing to suppose.

My brother-in-law clearly perceived that his plan had succeeded, and that the report of my large fortune had rendered my rival unwilling that any person should share with her the task of modernizing the country youth. My brother-in-law took my hand. "Nephew," said he,

"let me introduce you to a particular and excellent friend of mine."

I advanced with awkward indifference, saluted her, without once raising my eyes, and uttered some unintelligible compliment, which was set down to the score of provincial *gaucherie*. However, my embarrassment did not tell to my disadvantage, and I easily perceived by the many encouraging glances bestowed on me, that I might venture to press my suit without much fear of being denied; accordingly, ere we parted, I had received permission from Céline to call upon her the following day.

At the appointed hour I presented myself at the house of Céline; and advancing with perfect ease and self-confidence, laid at her feet a bouquet of roses, fastened round by a diamond ring. This mark of gallantry and good taste was most graciously received, and the fair object of my attentions took an opportunity of inquiring whether my uncle had any control over my fortune. To this I replied firmly in the negative; and Céline, satisfied that she should be enabled to plunder me quite at her ease, began to throw off much of her reserve, and openly to express the growing passion with which I inspired her.

A second meeting was made for the following day, when I returned, bearing a present of several magnificent Indian stuffs; among which was some muslin, so fine, that although sufficient in quantity for four dresses, it weighed scarcely fifteen ounces.

Céline was really a seducing object; witty, coquettish, and sprightly, a countenance beaming with the sweetest smiles, dark curling hair, large hazel eyes, a hand and foot moulded in the most perfect symmetry, were among the many charms with which nature had endowed her. Perhaps, indeed, her slender figure was not sufficiently *embonpoint*, but she was still too captivating for my wishes.

During this time I had much difficulty in preventing my anger from breaking out whenever I met the Duc de Cossé. I saw him, indeed, almost daily, as usual, and never without hearing him reiterate his assurances of never-failing attachment, which I feigned to believe, although nearly bursting with my desire of reproaching him with his perfidy.

At length this intrigue seemed rapidly approaching its *dénouement;* and one day that Céline had received me with open arms, and while still enduring the warmth of her embrace, a man suddenly entered the apartment: it was the Duc de Cossé.

Céline, at sight of him, uttered a cry of terror, and, pushing me away, hid her face with her hands, while I remained mute with sudden surprise and embarrassment, arising from the strict and fixed scrutiny with which the duke continued to gaze upon me. Worlds would I have given to have been beyond the reach of his penetrating looks. But, all at once, recovering his usual expression of countenance, he demanded of me, with an insulting smile, what was my business with Mademoiselle Céline ?

" Simply to pay my compliments, and seek to render myself agreeable in her eyes; and I flatter myself I have not been altogether unsuccessful."

These words, which it cost me no small difficulty to pronounce in an intelligible tone, terrified Céline into a sense of her own danger, and interrupting any further boasting on my part, she exclaimed:

" Poor silly child ! your ignorance of the forms of society can alone excuse your presumption in mistaking simple politeness for——"

" My good Céline," exclaimed the duke, " that this poor trembling swain of yours should not have sufficient discretion to refrain from boasting of a lady's favour, does not astonish me in the least, but that you should attempt

to pass off the tender endearments I just now witnessed for the mere form of politeness, is much more astonishing. Meanwhile, my dapper little gentleman," cried he, turning to me, " let me beg the honour of knowing by what name you are generally known ? "

" Vicomte Henri de Beauselle," replied I.

" 'Tis a name wholly unknown at Versailles," answered M. de Cossé, " nevertheless, I presume you are a man of honour, and will not object to giving me such proofs as I shall expect from you."

" You challenge me to fight ? "

" Unless, indeed, you manage these affairs by proxy, and can acquaint me with the name of any good-natured uncle or father who will take your place on the occasion. Speak, boy."

" Sir, I never fight ; I dislike it, and always refuse upon principle."

" Oh, the good-for-nothing little wretch," vociferated Céline. " Why, I protest he is a coward."

" Hold your tongue you insolent creature ! " cried I, with vehemence, giving her, at the same time, a hearty box on the ear. Enraged and confounded, Céline turned to implore the vengeance of the duke, who was laughing immoderately at the ludicrous scene.

" Fie, sir," cried he, at length ; " you insult one who cannot defend herself ; and now I have her cause as well as mine to avenge."

" Be it so," replied I, weeping ; " take the part of this creature ; it needed only such conduct to put the finish to the many wrongs I have received from you."

Céline, stupefied at the sight of my tears, gazed in silence ; while the duke, wholly unmoved, exclaimed :

" Come, come, my lord ; the sooner we terminate our business together the better." And without further ceremony, he took me by the arm, and led, or rather





MADAME DU BARRI, AND THE DUC DE COSSÉ BRISSAC

The portrait of Madame du Barri is from a miniature painted by R. Cosway during her last visit to England.

carried me to his equipage, which waited at the door, into which he compelled me to ascend, without my having the power to offer the smallest resistance.

Much more uneasy at the anticipation of what M. de Cossé must think of my strange conduct than by any apprehensions of being despised by Céline for my pusillanimity, I scarcely ventured to raise my eyes from the ground; when, suddenly, my meditations were broken into by the duke's bursting into a violent fit of laughter. Surprised, I was about to ask the cause of all this mirth, when my companion, catching me in his arms, embraced me with a vehemence which entirely deprived me of utterance.

"You have, indeed, avenged yourself, my lovely friend," cried the duke, "and, I trust, will no longer refuse me your pardon for all the pain I have caused you."

"You know me then, perfidious man!" exclaimed I, half crying, half laughing.

"How could I fail of recognizing those heavenly features under whatsoever disguise I might behold them? Believe me, they are too deeply engraved on my heart to be for one moment mistaken. I knew you the instant I entered the room, and took my measures accordingly."

"Would I had been aware of your extreme penetration," cried I, with all the volatility of my natural disposition; "I might then have impressed my hated rival with a high opinion of my courage at a cheap rate. But how can you, my lord, justify yourself for so gross, so flagrant a violation of your vows of perpetual constancy?"

"By confessing my fault, and throwing myself on your mercy. An error is not a crime. Be then yourself; pardon this one lapse, and bind me, thereby, more firmly than ever to you."

"Could you doubt the sincerity of my affection?" interrupted I, with more of tenderness than anger.

"Believe me, no," returned the duke. "I scorn to shelter myself under so unworthy an idea. Never could I doubt you, even were you to retaliate upon me by giving me a rival in your turn."

"That will never happen," cried I. "But tell me in what direction are we driving?"

"To Luciennes."

"For heaven's sake," exclaimed I, "do not let me be seen there so strangely attired. Bid your coachman proceed with all speed to the residence of Comte Jean, where I will strip off this odious dress never again to resume it."

We had by this time reached the Champs Élysées, but, at the duke's command, the carriage turned in the direction of Comte Jean's hotel. Luckily, my brother-in-law was from home; I therefore bade the duke adieu, promising to see him in the evening, and hastened to resume my feminine attire, after which, I returned to Luciennes, whither M. de Cossé quickly followed me, and, with many assurances of contrition for the past, and promises never again to see Céline, obtained my pardon for his offence

CHAPTER XVIII

QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE

It happened that public attention became riveted upon the doctrines of a German professor, named Mesmer, who about this period brought the newly-discovered science of magnetism with him into France. His lectures were attended by crowded audiences, and while some went away with the impression of his being something superior to this world, a man who could unfold such wonders, many departed with the conviction that if he were endowed with supernatural powers, he derived them from Lucifer himself.

The lively imagination of Madame de Forcalquier eagerly caught at the wild tenets preached by Mesmer, and she exerted herself so successfully over my mind as to induce me to become one of his disciples, and went to the trouble of having a magnetic apparatus set up at Luciennes, which quickly brought a train of Mesmerians around me. I should tell you that the initiatory fee demanded by the doctor for the explanation of the workings of the machine was a hundred louis, and it did somewhat stagger my faith to find one who professed to have no other intention than to serve humanity demand so large a premium from his followers. However, enthusiasm easily reconciles the most seeming contradictions, and the passion for magnetism swept away all attempts to measure its proceedings by the dictates of reason.

The fêtes were not less splendid at Versailles this year than the preceding one; on the contrary, luxury and extravagance seemed each day to tax their powers to

invent fresh delights and refinements. In the midst of all this splendour, the passion for gaming continued in its fullest force; fortune and character seemed daily staked and lost over the destructive dice. Among the greatest losers was the Comte d'Artois, whose strict scruples in discharging these debts of honour reduced him to the greatest difficulties, and made him the continual dupe of designing persons, whose singular good fortune might have rendered a more suspicious person disposed to see something like good management as well as good luck in their uninterrupted success. Never had gallantry so free a scope, for when the fair gamesters were bankrupts in purse, they found their smiles frequently accepted in lieu of pecuniary payment. But I would fain call attention to the close of Lent, 1780, and the famous sermon preached from that awful denunciation, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." I was present at its delivery, and can answer for the deep and solemn impression it produced; but Paris, although equal to the devoted city in pride and impiety, was not yet moved to a more than temporary feeling of repentance; indeed, the unconcern with which the higher classes trampled upon every outward observance of religion was calculated to produce the most fatal effects on those who, naturally enough, took their tone from their superiors. The following incident will tend to prove the truth of the assertion.

On Ash Wednesday, 1780, the Prince de Lambesc, his brother, and the Princesse de Vandemont, were returning from the country in a carriage drawn by six horses, when they overtook a procession composed of priests carrying extreme unction to a dying man. The postilion, from a natural impulse of religious veneration, pulled up his horses, but the coachman flogging his violently, compelled him to move forward in so rapid a manner that an attendant priest was flung down and trampled under the

horses' feet, to the great amusement of the young noblemen in the carriage.

The enraged multitude, however, were not disposed to take the same view of things, but pursued the vehicle with stones, mud, and the bitterest imprecations. Nor is it probable that they would have escaped with their lives, had not the terrified drivers urged the animals they drove to their utmost speed, and so escaped the storm. The wounded priest being raised from the ground, was carried to his convent, and placed under the care of a surgeon, who pronounced his recovery extremely doubtful. The Brotherhood of Saint Paul, to which he belonged, instantly made a report to the archbishop of the enormous sacrilege committed; this latter contented himself with writing to the Comtesse de Brienne, who, fearing the consequences of so flagrant an offence, gave orders for the dismissal of the coachman, and, hastening to the convent, bought off the offender from further punishment by settling on the wounded man an annuity of 200 livres, and an assurance of her fortune, favour and protection. Thus ended an affair which, under the reign of Louis XV, would have been visited with the severest rigour of the law, aided by the royal displeasure, which would, in all probability, have banished from the kingdom the Prince de Lambesc and his sacrilegious companion. But alas! his excellent and pious grandson was already beginning to feel himself a king in nothing but name.

About this time a party of young men, nearly all military officers, formed themselves into a kind of club for the purpose of getting up plays and joining in various recreations. Among them were Messieurs de Chabannes, de Chabrillant, de Louvois, de Champcenity, de Tilly, de Soyecour, de Cossé, de Dillon, de Polignac, de Vaucheuil, de Thiars, de Noailles, etc., etc. The mirth and spirit of these meetings were quickly noised abroad, and excited

in the mind of Marie Antoinette a lively desire to share in a species of pleasure partaken of by the most correct females at Court. This inclination on the part of the queen somewhat awed and alarmed the members of this little community, and by every respectful argument they sought to dissuade her majesty from mingling in their gaieties, but in vain; she had formed her resolution, and declared that if she was not expressly invited she would break in upon them by surprise. This hint was sufficient, and the whole party took care to learn the evening on which the royal visit was to be made, as well as to be duly prepared.

On the night in question, the assembly was held at the house of the Duchesse de Villequier, when the arrival of her majesty put an end to a concert, to which all were listening with delighted attention. The queen, who loved something of a novel and more entertaining description, honestly avowed her indifference to so insipid an amusement. Eager to gratify their illustrious guest, they began playing the novel game called *descampativos*, which was played by persons so completely enveloped in a large white mantle or drapery as to disguise both face and figure, while one among them, seated in the centre of the room, held a handkerchief, which was touched in turn by all the others, who used a thousand tricks and pantomimic gestures to divert the sitting person from guessing their right name. The game ended by the discovery of one of the party, who was then required to take the chair in the middle of the room, while he who had formerly occupied it rose and joined the rest of the party.

The novelty of this sport amused the queen excessively, and the party was still further strengthened by the arrival of the king, Madame, the Comte and Comtesse d'Artois, and the Duc and Duchesse de Chartres. A select number of these amateur actors next performed a

parody upon a popular play, after which, at the queen's desire, they renewed the *descampativos*, in which the king, princes, and princesses joined, and the happy party did not break up till four o'clock in the morning.

Etiquette must ever be deemed one of the greatest hindrances to pleasure, and it may be compared in the case of royalty to the holiday-suit of some country gentleman, which, when laid aside, identifies him with his fellow-men ; but when resumed, commands the rustic bows and obsequious respect of all admiring spectators.

The French nation, ever accustomed to the most rigid observance of etiquette, could imagine neither virtue nor majesty without it ; and censured the youthful gaiety and easy affability of its young and lovely queen, and frowned at her innocent enjoyment of pleasures so natural at her time of life. Alas ! these strictures came equally loud and severe from those more immediately about the person of Marie Antoinette, and the very nobility who now accuse the people of undervaluing their excellent queen, were the first to pave the way for the frightful scenes we now daily see enacted. For my own part, I shudder to behold those leagued against our beloved princess, whom a grateful recollection of former favours should have bound to her in adamantine chains.

It was about this time that having been unwell and full of sorrowful memories, the tender solicitude of the Duc de Cossé soon perceived that change of scene and object would be more likely than any other means to divert the melancholy abstraction which occasionally stole over me, and with this view he proposed an excursion to Bagatelle.

This terrestrial paradise arose from a wager between Marie Antoinette and the Comte d'Artois, the former of whom undertook (under penalty of 100,000 livres) to build the pavilion of Bagatelle, and entirely furnish it in the course of a month. Her majesty was, however, dis-

appointed in her expectations, and compelled to pay forfeit. As yet, this fairy abode had scarcely been profaned by the gaze of curiosity, and great interest was necessary to obtain permission to visit it. Two days after the duke had invited me to accompany him thither, we started at an early hour from Paris (where I then was) in a splendid carriage and six. The approach to Bagatelle is through a wild and apparently uncultivated plantation; masses of rock and granite rudely piled together conspire to give an air of wildness and sterility to the scene, which is, in fact, a mere contrivance to heighten the effect of the smiling beauties which afterwards break in full luxuriance upon the sight. The road serpentines through a narrow and somewhat difficult passage cut out of the solid rock, interspersed with immense trunks of trees overgrown with clustering ivy and underwood. At the end of this barren approach the château is descried, on the principal door of which is a fanciful device, surmounted by the words, *Parva sed apta*, and, standing in a circle before the entrance, are placed the statues of Silence, Mystery, Folly, Night, Pleasure, and Reason: how or why the latter found admission there I cannot tell.

I gazed with admiration at the *coup d'œil* which presented itself, and bestowed an equal share of praise upon the choice of materials, and the judicious manner in which they had been employed. Everything connected with the edifice proved the existence of the most refined taste, and abundantly showed that magnificence alone had not presided over its construction. It was, in fact, a sort of architectural miniature, of such beauty as to suggest the idea of its being precisely what, in the days of heathenish superstitions, anyone might have supposed a god would have selected for his abode, whenever he had chosen to assume the mortal form, and visit this terrestrial sphere.

The ground floor consisted of a narrow vestibule, from which opened a dining-room, salon, boudoir, and billiard-room. The boudoir particularly charmed me; the decorations were most elegant; the fittings were of pink and silver, while immense mirrors, fixed in the walls, reflected each form and object; in a recess stood a bed, the very aspect of which invited repose, while the sides and ceiling of this tasteful apartment were ornamented with some of the finest specimens of art; from the windows the finest points of view presented themselves, and after a long glance over the smiling scenery, the eye rested on the bridge of Neuilly, which terminated the vista. I inquired for the staircase, and was shown a steep and narrow flight of steps placed in a corner as if in shame at its own insignificancy; it was, in fact, merely a sort of model for a larger one, although formed of fine mahogany, carved with the most airy lightness; it seemed as though suspended in the air, and supporting each stair by such delicate cobweb-work as to appear fit only to be pressed by the feet of fairies; two persons could not ascend it at the same time, and a gentleman escorting a lady could only follow her, without having the opportunity of offering his arm. Such a state of things was wholly incompatible with the gallantry and politeness practised in the reign of Louis XIV, any more than during the life of the late king.

This staircase conducted to the sleeping-rooms, beautiful from their apparent simplicity; that destined for the master of this lovely mansion particularly attracted my admiration; it represented a military tent, supported by weapons and warlike emblems picturesquely grouped; these were surmounted by casques and helmets, so arranged as to form a kind of capital to these novel pillars. The chimney-piece was supported by cannon reared on end, the stoves were constructed of a heap of cannon-balls

and grenades, and the frame for holding the wood represented hunting-horns; in a word, everything in the chamber was calculated to nourish a martial spirit, and to make the prince who should occupy it more than ever solicitous to rival the glory of his august predecessors. How would Henry IV have loved to dream there of fresh victories and new laurels to be gained—how would he have tasted of happiness in this sweet spot in the arms of his fair Gabrielle.

The offices and rooms underground received light from a sort of grating contrived in the steps leading to the vestibule which surrounded the pavilion; the garden, although small, was tastefully laid out, and admirably accorded with the lightness and elegance of the building to which it belonged. Still, I would not have exchanged Bagatelle, with all its costliness and rare beauty, for Luciennes; the former seemed to me, spite of its splendour, by no means deserving to be the residence of a powerful monarch; nor were its diminutive proportions calculated to impress on the mind of the beholder any great or vast idea of the state and majesty of him who inhabited it.

In the midst of the delight I experienced from the view of this singular and lovely place, a thousand fears tormented me, lest I might be surprised by some of the Court, which was then at La Muette. I therefore hastened to terminate my visit, to the great regret of my companion, who, charmed at having my society so entirely to himself, would fain have prolonged our stay.

I could now speak of Bagatelle, although curiosity was on the rack to discover by what means I had been enabled to gain admittance there. A few days after my return I was much amused with the Baron de Sugère, who called on me, saying:

"Ah, Madame la Comtesse, I have heard of your

delightful excursion to Bagatelle; you are, indeed, one of fortune's favourite children; good luck seems for ever to attend your footsteps."

"What is the auspicious event you allude to?" asked I. "I shall really be delighted to know."

"Nay, madam, why conceal what is so honourable to yourself? Besides, I know all about it. In the first place, you wrote a note to his royal highness, requesting he would grant you permission to view the Château, to which he replied, that he should himself do the honours of it to you. Accordingly, he received you at the door, assisted you from your carriage, and conducted you over the building with the most gracious politeness; then, as you were about to enter the garden, the queen accidentally arrived; you wished to avoid her, but the prince prevented you. Her majesty approached, and you, falling at her feet, thanked her for all her goodness, to which she replied, 'Rise, madam, the past is forgotten, and I trust the future will present more agreeable sources of recollection.'"

This coinage of the good people of Paris had evidently been received with entire credence by the baron, and while I inwardly smiled at his folly in believing it, I could not bring myself to contradict a report so flattering to myself. I therefore eluded a direct reply, which, by confirming the tale in the eyes of my worthy friend, increased the natural malevolence of his disposition which could ill endure the thoughts of good to another.

Perhaps in no part of the globe is scandal more eagerly welcomed than at Paris; it is there loved for itself alone, and the delight felt in repeating a scandalous fact is wholly independent of any feeling of like or dislike towards those who are the actors in it. This is not, however, the case when it relates to any of the leading characters at Court, and public curiosity was particularly

on the stretch to learn the exact particulars regarding the queen's recent taste for private theatricals at Petit Trianon, where, in further violation of the rules of etiquette, she always selected the parts of waiting-maids, soubrettes, etc.; and it not a little surprised every person to see her majesty not satisfied with becoming an actress, but actually choosing to appear wearing the dress of servitude belonging to the characters she was pleased to assume. Mesdames Julie and Diane de Polignac were also enlisted into the *corps dramatique*. The actors were the Comte d'Artois, Messrs de Dillon, de Reyenval, de Coigny, de Vaucheuil, d'Adhemer, and a few other select personages. Dagincourt and Dugayon were chosen to instruct these courtly Rosciuses in their new vocation; but few persons were admitted, and, at first, the audience consisted only of the different members of the royal family, and a few persons of the household placed quite at the extremity of the apartment in which the theatre was erected. At one of these representations, and just at the moment when the queen had concluded a little song, a loud hiss was heard. Her majesty, fully sensible of there being but one person in the company who would presume to venture such a mark of disapprobation, advanced to the front of the theatre, and, addressing the king, said, with a low curtsy, "Sir, if my performance does not meet with your approbation, have the kindness to retire. You will have your money returned you at the door."

This playful retort was loudly applauded, and the king, while asking pardon for his offence, protested that he had committed it merely for the sake of mischief, and by no means from ill-nature. However, it was universally admitted that Marie Antoinette's acting fell far below mediocrity, and might well have justified the disapproval of her consort. The royal corps were soon weary of playing to so scanty an audience, and longed for a few

admiring friends to witness their exertions. Accordingly, a select number of courtiers was admitted, to the extreme envy and jealousy of such as were excluded. One of the malcontents said, in my hearing, "Her majesty seems over-fond of playing comedy; perhaps, ere long, she will favour us with a tragedy." I cannot pretend to explain with what feelings this remark was made; but certain it was that he who uttered it has since appeared foremost among the queen's enemies, and eagerly embraced every opportunity of adding to her sorrows.

By some chance her majesty happened to learn something of the general disapprobation entertained of her appearing in private theatricals, and it occurred to her that possibly the action might be less odious could she induce any other member of the royal family to imitate her example. She therefore sought to gain Madame, wife of Monsieur, over to her side. A coolness had lately existed between these two princesses, which her majesty was now the first to break through by soliciting her sister-in-law to join the private plays, and to take a part in the next they should perform. This was readily promised by Madame, who possessed an excessive fondness for pleasure and amusement; however, she was not able to fulfil her engagement, for when the affair was mentioned to Monsieur, he positively refused to permit it, nor could any entreaties turn him from his purpose. The queen, much displeased, remonstrated upon the severity of such a prohibition, to which he coolly replied, that his rank and situation in life did not permit his wife to become an actress.

"When I do not consider it derogatory to my dignity to do so," replied Marie Antoinette, proudly, "methinks Madame might safely follow my example."

"Pardon me, your majesty is queen, and may do anything."

"I understand. Madame is merely queen in expectation, and you would fain see her ascend the throne surrounded with the high homage and respect of the whole nation."

"I did not say so," answered the prince, with imperturbable calmness.

"But you thought it, my good brother, which is not much better."

Further discussion was prevented by his royal highness, who, with a low bow, quitted the apartment, and went to relate the affair among his particular friends.

I learned about the same period, from very good authority, that a thousand manœuvres were afloat to supply the king with a mistress. Never did such an idea enter the mind of Louis XVI, whose conjugal fidelity was unquestionable, but those who mistrusted the unbounded influence the queen possessed over his mind would fain have given her a rival. Among the most remarkable of the candidates for this honour was a lady named Saint Alban, beautiful as an angel, but wicked and depraved even beyond the height to which females of her class were accustomed to carry their intrigues. This lady having been well instructed in the part she was to play, arrived at Brunoy, where she was placed so as to be most likely to attract the king's observation, while many judicious friends were skilfully grouped around for the purpose of loudly extolling her grace and beauty, and directing the king's attention to her. Louis XVI, far more bent upon watching the amusements of the evening than the beauty of Madame Saint Alban, heard with indifference the eulogiums of his companions, and when, at length, importuned into a closer observation, he merely raised his eyeglass, and said, "She is certainly a fine woman, but not nearly so handsome as the queen."

Madame Saint Alban, informed of this husband-like

speech, quitted Brunoy in disgust, and her failure compelled the conspirators to look around for a fresh object to captivate the king. Fortunately for their purpose, a lovely creature made her appearance about this time at Paris; she was deemed sufficiently qualified to melt the icy heart of the king, and, accordingly, she received a visit from a nobleman, high in the favour of a certain prince, who said to her:

"Have you, Mademoiselle, any objection to embark in a scheme, for which you shall receive 200,000 livres in case of a failure; while, should success attend it, the reward would be of the most dazzling nature?"

"Who that possessed the use of their senses could resist such a proposition?" said the fair object addressed; "but what am I required to do?"

"Simply to personate the sister of a smith for a month or two."

The lady smiled.

"This will not, at least, be a very difficult part to play," said she.

"Pardon me, *I* think it will. For instance, you must be a simple, modest, timid maiden, virtuous to excess, and shocked beyond expression at the least offence against your innocence; in a word, you must play the hypocrite before a man whose honest nature suspects no one of feigning a part."

"My dear sir," replied Justine, "for 200,000 livres I would pass for a nun if necessary."

This ready assent drew forth a more complete explanation, and the demoiselle learned that it was before the king she was to enact the part of an inexperienced maiden, sister to one of the men who worked at a forge belonging to his majesty. It was not concealed from her that such an attempt would expose her to the jealousy of the queen,

but ambition and interest made Mademoiselle Justine ready to run all risks.

The plan of action was quickly marked out, and she was introduced to her pretended brother, a Gascon, of about her own age. The new relatives were instructed in their various parts, and it was settled that Justine, under one pretext or other, should frequently call in to visit her brother while the king was superintending some article he was beating out at the forge.

The brother was further instructed to make Justine the frequent subject of conversation between himself and a fellow-workman, who was to praise her beauty and virtues, while he sighed in the style of a desponding lover who had been rejected by her, and this could easily be done in the presence of the king, as his kindness and condescension permitted the workmen to converse without any restraint during his visits to the forge. Now that Lebel could no longer furnish materials for an intrigue, you must confess that a more deeply laid one than this could scarcely have been devised; and while the unsuspecting monarch listened unconsciously to the praises bestowed on Justine, he little dreamed how he was falling into the snare so cunningly spread for him.

One day, while a long discussion was going on between the Gascon and his friend respecting the charms and obduracy of Justine, a gentle tap was heard at the door. "Bless me," cried one of them, opening it, and starting back with well-feigned surprise, "here *is* Mademoiselle Justine." At this name, which had so long been rendered familiar to his ears, Louis XVI turned hastily round, and saw a lovely, blushing girl, who, at the sight of a stranger, curtsied timidly, and was about to retire, when her brother, catching her hand, prayed permission to retire with her for a few minutes that he might not disturb his majesty. "Stay where you are,"

answered the king, "and let me be no hindrance to your conversation."

So saying, Louis XVI resumed his work over a piece of iron he was busily fashioning, while Justine, having glided into a nook of the workshop, conversed in a low tone for a few minutes, when, with a modest grace, she saluted the party and disappeared. Scarcely had the door closed upon her than fresh raptures arose at her loveliness, mingled with deep regrets that she should possess so inaccessible a heart. Spite of himself, the king's attention was attracted by these praises, and when he compared them with the sweet girl to whom they related, he could but think how far more attractive was the poor, but chaste and simple Justine to the sparkling, ambitious, and artificial females of the Court.

Everything was proceeding favourably for this intrigue, and Justine had every reason to believe the king's affection half won, when, unluckily, his visits to the forge were interrupted by a journey to Marly. Mademoiselle Justine, delighted with the flattering prospects which presented themselves, could not resist the gratification of communicating to a friend her approaching greatness. The friend chosen upon this occasion was no other than Céline, between whom and myself an explanation had taken place, after the ridiculous scene my jealousy of M. de Cossé had made me perform, and from many little kindnesses I had been enabled to show her, a lively gratitude had arisen on her part. She, therefore, whilst promising Justine to keep her secret inviolable, asked permission to make an exception in favour of one dear and particular friend, on whose discretion, she said, she could confidently rely. Need I say this friend was myself? And, to my great surprise, upon awaking one morning, I found Céline seated by the side of my bed, with a face full of importance. Upon my questioning her as to the

cause of this early visit, she declared I should try and guess it, and when all my attempts proved vain, she stooped towards my pillow and related what I have been telling you.

"Thank you, my dear Céline," said I, "but you have forgotten to bind me to secrecy."

"Never mind," said she, with much *naïveté*, "but do not trust it to more than one person."

I thanked her again for her confidence in me, and when she had retired, I determined to avail myself of her permission.

I perceived that there was no time to be lost; but to whom should I trust to convey my important information to the person most concerned? All at once a bright idea darted into my brain, and I hastily wrote the following letter:

Madame la Duchesse,—I have need of your mediation in order to render a service of some importance to her majesty, and amid the many leading characters at Court, I have selected you as the one in whose nobleness and generosity of soul I have the greatest confidence. The present affair has reference to the queen alone, and I must beg you to believe my present conduct has its origin solely in gratitude. I shall feel greatly obliged by your fixing a time and place when I can have the honour of seeing you.

I remain, etc., etc.

The following reply was brought me the day after sending the above:

Madam,—You have excited my curiosity so strongly that I cannot refuse to accept the proposed meeting; but still, in the peculiar situation in which we are mutually placed, I think we shall do right to conceal our interview

from public gaze. I shall be to-morrow, at three o'clock precisely, in the church of the Jacobins, in the Rue St Honoré. Adieu, madam, believe me ever your friend,

The Duchesse de Grammont.

It was, indeed, to Madame de Grammont herself I had chosen to apply. In the midst of all my enmity with this lady I had always esteemed and admired the firmness of her character; and the unshrinking courage and energy with which she had opposed me when all else yielded and bent before me, had impressed me with a high respect for her. I knew no person better qualified to open the eyes of the queen, and I therefore resolved to trust her, certain of never having reason to repent so doing I was punctual in attending the rendezvous, where I found the duchess awaiting me in one of the small chapels on the right hand. We took our seats beside each other with our faces turned towards the wall, the better to conceal ourselves from observation.

After the first exchange of compliments, Madame de Grammont led to the affair which had drawn us thither, by saying, "You have an important communication to make to me, I believe."

I then related all I knew respecting Justine. At each word the duchess grew more and more attentive, fixing her penetrating eyes upon me as though she would have read my inmost soul; but the calmness and composure with which I met her gaze soon satisfied her that neither envy nor jealousy had instigated me to the disclosure, and she soon perceived that I was more solicitous to serve the queen than desirous of injuring Justine. When I had concluded my recital she pressed my hand kindly, and said, "You excite my wonder equally with my admiration, and I most sincerely lament all I have said or done to injure you. Rely upon the gratitude of her majesty, who. I

fancy, has some suspicion of the fact without having any clue to her suspicions. Should I have need of further particulars, and if you, madam, receive any fresh information, we will arrange to meet again. Adieu, rely upon my zeal and secrecy." So saying, Madame de Grammont bowed, and left the church.

Several days elapsed without my hearing anything from Madame de Grammont, and I was beginning to grow impatient, when I received another visit from Céline, who entered my apartment with a look of ill-suppressed mirth, which yielding, ere she could speak, to an irrepressible gaiety, she burst into a fit of laughter so loud and long that in my anxiety to learn what had brought her to me, I could almost have beaten her for her merriment.

"Pardon me," said she, at length, when the fit had a little subsided, "but I really could not help it; never, surely, had love affair so singular a *dénouement*."

"When you are pleased to let me into the secret which so greatly amuses you," said I, "I shall be better able to give you my opinion."

"Well, then," cried she, "the days of heroism have returned, and Scipio lives again in the person of our gracious monarch; but listen, I pray you, and I will relate all I know in the very words in which Justine herself gave me the account.

"'I used to visit my brother daily, and never without meeting his majesty, who evidently beheld me with much pleasure, questioned me respecting my manner of life, my habits, and my family, each day treating me with greater kindness, and insensibly addressing me as though one of his own family. When I was well established in the workshop, my pretended lover, feigning an inability to support my indifference, quitted the spot for ever. The king perceived this, and put many questions to me to learn why I did not return the affection of my admirer?

I evaded a direct reply, but with many sighs and half-averted looks endeavoured to make myself understood in vain. My royal visitor would not or did not take the hint so plainly given.

" ' On the following day I ventured to recollect, all at once, having forgotten to close the door of the humble apartments supposed to be occupied by my brother and myself, and I affected to quit the shop to repair my negligence. My good-natured brother instantly offered to go for me if his majesty would permit him ; the king nodded assent. Matthieu went, and I remained alone with his majesty. I had determined to make the most of the opportunity, thinking that kings' hearts were not more difficult to subdue than those of their subjects, and, accordingly, I laid direct siege to that of Louis, and had it been pregnable, I must have taken it by storm. Once, indeed, I thought I had conquered, for the king was bold enough to seize my hand and had half carried it to his lips, when suddenly he let it fall, as though its touch had blistered him. In vain did I throw the most tender expression into my eyes, his reflected only the placid calm of an anchorite, and his looks of admiration were such as you would bestow upon some splendid painting or statue. Long as was the absence of my brother, his return found us not one jot further advanced.

" ' Yesterday morning the king entered the workshop at the accustomed hour, but calm, and apparently musing on some resolve. He walked across the room once or twice with folded arms, then, suddenly stopping and addressing Matthieu, he said, " My good friend, you have a very pretty sister, whose beauty will expose her to a thousand perils ; she deserves to be snatched from such a fate, and she shall be ; here is an order for 24,000 livres, which I present her for a marriage portion, and here are 100 louis for yourself ; return immediately both of you into your

native province and live happily. I do not desire that your sister should come to thank me, and I even charge you to forbid her, in my name, making any attempts to see me again ; you may now retire."

" ' My Gascon brother,' " continued Céline (still speaking in the words of her friend), " ' came, looking like a simpleton, to relate these words to me ; no doubt, they were very sublime, but I listened to them with the keenest disappointment, for what was the paltry sum I had gained to the brilliant destiny I had hoped to have secured.'

" Here," said Céline, " my poor friend terminated her recital, which I have flown impatiently to communicate to you, and I can only say, by way of comment, that it is a pity this trait of continence on the part of our amiable king cannot be generally known, it might provoke the nobility and clergy to follow his example."

I smiled at this conclusion, and telling Céline that I wished to be alone, she left me, while I seated myself at my writing-table to send these last particulars to Madame de Grammont.

Her reply contained but these words, " All is known " ; but on the same paper was traced, in another handwriting, " I thank you."

CHAPTER XIX

THE REVOLUTION

How shall I ever begin to relate the horrors that began to overtake France in 1789? One event followed another with such rapidity as almost to crowd hours into ages; the Hospital of the Invalides was forced by the multitude, who seized upon all the arms they could find there, and established a kind of Volunteer Corps, which has since become the National Guard, and he who did not hasten to enrol himself into this new militia left his patriotism liable to the strongest suspicion.

I remained all this while in a state of the most cruel alarm, hearing continually accounts as distressing as they were contradictory. From Paris I heard that the revolution was decided and victorious, while at Versailles they reported that strong and effectual measures were in agitation, which could not fail to put down the insurgents. The command of the troops had been given to the Maréchal Duc de Broglie, aided by Baron de Besenval, and the various regiments quartered near the capital received orders to march directly to the scene of action. On the 13th of July the Duc de Cossé paid me a hurried visit at a late hour in the evening.

"All will be well," said he, "and we shall yet be saved. His majesty has acted with promptitude and decision, and ere this time to-morrow night the National Assembly will be purged from those unquiet spirits which at present agitate it."

"Alas!" cried I, "why have you told me this? Instead of sleep to-night I shall hear nothing but the

report of cannon, and should I fall into a slumber, I shall be startled from it by some frightful dream, telling me that the peaceful gardens of Luciennes are invaded by the rebellious host."

"Nay, my sweet countess, be not alarmed, I beseech you; nothing of a serious nature will ensue, I pledge you my word; the *canaille* will never think of offering any resistance, and the first sight of the glittering bayonets will be sufficient to put them to the rout."

The air of confidence with which the duke spoke infused a spirit of security and courage into my own mind; still, I was anxious to prevail on him to accept a bed for the night at Luciennes, but this he was unable to occupy from his being compelled to attend at Versailles, by reason of his rank, as colonel of a Swiss corps. The queen, who greatly esteemed him, had requested of him to be at his post during the whole of the 14th of July, as well as the night preceding, and all my entreaties were unable to keep him away. I went to bed, but found it utterly impossible to sleep; every little noise, whether real or imaginary, kept me awake, but everything remained quiet around Luciennes; the Duc de Cossé had promised to dispatch a courier to me the first thing in the morning, and with a beating heart I awaited his coming.

My people, who were on the alert with the break of day, reported to me that several persons they had met on the road had assured them that all Paris had risen in a body and declared against the royal family, while a relation of one of my women came in with the intelligence of having been present at the taking of the Bastille, and the massacre of M. de Launay, M. Flesselles, and several others. This news, so different from what I had expected, threw me into an agony of grief, and I shut myself up in my apartments that I might weep more at my ease.

The solitude to which I was left not a little contributed

to my fears. My salon was deserted, and of a large party I had invited to dinner, not one arrived, and my only society was two or three neighbours, more terrified and apprehensive than myself.

On the 15th of July I received a visit from the Maréchale de Mirepoix; she seemed to me ill and dejected. Embracing me with more than her wonted affection, she exclaimed:

"Well, my dear countess, you see what sad troubles are befalling us; a new era has commenced, and we must give up all hopes of Court favour and preferment. Alas! our poor king himself will soon be a mere cipher, dependent upon the people for the very bread he eats. What has become of the boasted courage of royalty? Laid aside for ever with the rusty armour of his predecessors. You are, no doubt, informed that her majesty's favourites, the Polignacs, are on the move; the Prince de Condé, the Duc de Bourbon, the Duc d'Enghien, and the Prince de Conti go with them?"

"Impossible!" cried I; "what have they to fear? wherefore should they forsake their king? Pardon me, madam, but I cannot believe so base, so disloyal a desertion; some designing person has imposed on your credulity."

"My dear friend," returned the maréchale, "what I tell you is the positive truth; this very night witnesses their flight, nor will they go alone, for the Comte d'Artois makes another in the party."

In vain did I feel incredulous of the good maréchale's statement; on the 17th of July, the whole of the Comte d'Artois's family, with himself and the greater number of the courtiers, repaired to Turin, the other princes took the road to Brussels, while the Polignacs, with the Prince de Lambesc, filed off towards Germany.

Louis XVI, irritated and goaded as he was by the taking of the Bastille, was compelled to subdue his own

feelings and humble himself before his rebellious subjects; but, upon his arrival at Paris, he encountered only the violence of the populace, and the angry, scowling looks of the citizens, who conducted him to the Hotel de Ville, where M. Bailly, Mayor of Paris, harangued the unhappy monarch at some length upon his duties as a king. Louis listened with calm composure, which was only interrupted when the glittering arms of the *Gardes Nationales* caught his eye; but, quickly recovering himself, he bowed to the audience and quitted them, apparently reconciled and restored to their good opinion.

From this moment the revolution was perfected; the meeting assumed a fresh character, or rather threw off all appearance of a regular assembly; the salons of the *noblesse* were invaded by the bourgeois, who insolently paraded through the apartments of those whom they would scarcely have presumed to address a twelvemonth back.

Among the revolutionary party I passed for an enemy of the queen's, so that, having no mistrust of me, they openly avowed their schemes and intentions towards her, and I was enabled at all times to put her majesty on her guard against any threatening danger.

The next blow struck after the annihilation of the benefices of the clergy was the abolition of all the titles and honours belonging to the nobility; and for this purpose an edict had passed on the 5th of August in the preceding year, by which the nobles were dispossessed of all their rights and feudal privileges, upon the proposition (if I mistake not) of an obscure individual, named Matthieu de Montmorenci, who, but for this daring act, might never have been heard of. This resolution was followed up on the 19th of June by an order for suppressing all titles, armorial bearings, heraldic ornaments, etc., orders of the Holy Ghost, St Michael, St Lazare, etc., etc.,

making an exception only in favour of the order of St Louis for the sake of the military. We were all *un*-countessed, *un*marchionessed, to the great delight of the *canaille*, who amused themselves with singing through the streets and under our windows in the words of Molière, "Allons! saute, marquis!" while those titled persons, thus rudely divested of all save the appellation their parents would have borne had they been plain mechanics, heard themselves styled after the new manner of things with utter surprise and consternation. The Duc de Fronsac became simply Vignerot, the de Coignys, who were not even suffered to adopt their family name of Franquetot, were known only by the simple appellation of Giraud, the Duc de Bouillon was transformed into Latour, the family of d'Escars was known as Perruse, and the Rochefoucaults were styled des Verts; in fact, it was altogether a complete chaotic confusion which defied all attempts to arrange or comprehend it.

An order was issued for effacing all armorial bearings from the panels of carriages, and for dressing domestics in the very plainest livery that could be devised. We smiled, but it was with bitterness of heart, for things were not likely to end here.

One evening I was agreeably surprised by a visit from Madame de Campan, who, after talking for some time upon indifferent subjects, suddenly exclaimed:

"My dear countess, could you oblige me by calling on me the day after to-morrow, about ten o'clock, at the Tuileries. I will take care to be alone, and we might then discourse at our ease?"

"And why could we not do so here, where we have leisure and quiet?" said I.

Madame de Campan only replied by a mournful shake of the head, which made me much regret having asked so imprudent a question, for I could easily suppose I was

not invited to such a rendezvous without some very important necessity.

That same evening I was informed that a strange gentleman desired to speak with me in private. I desired he might be admitted, and when we were alone, the person thus addressed me :

" Is it, madam, your desire to remain tranquil and unmolested in these troublesome times ? "

" Most assuredly," replied I ; " nor do I believe myself singular in forming such a wish."

" More striking proofs of your real sentiments are required," answered the stranger. " You are aware of the spot, in the Château of Versailles, where the late king concealed a casket of vast importance, and——"

"Sir !" exclaimed I, turning deadly pale, "you are asking a singular question."

" Which seems not a little to alarm you," replied my interrogator, with the utmost sang-froid. " It is evident, madam, that you are in possession of the secret I am desirous of learning. Besides, my previous information tells me that Louis XV confided this fact only to yourself, the chancellor, and the Prince de Soubise ; the latter is dead, and the former no longer able to recollect any past event. The last time this casket was opened was when the late king placed in it a large packet, sealed with five large green seals, you standing with a taper in your hand to afford his majesty a light. You see that we are in possession of every detail relative to this mysterious affair."

" And he from whom you have learned it is a traitor, whose base conduct I should hate myself could I imitate."

" So much the worse for yourself."

" May I know from whom you come ? "

The stranger stooped and whispered in my ear a name which I could have wished not to have heard, and which might have influenced me under any other circumstances ;

but nothing could shake my resolution upon the present occasion, and the unknown, finding that I persisted in my refusal, left me with a bow of respect, and a smile of such malignant import as made me shudder.

The casket in question still exists, and was that in which the late king was used to preserve all those important papers and writings not intended to be seen by any eye but his own, or whose contents might compromise the safety of some august individuals, and I trembled at the bare apprehension of their existence having become known to certain parties.

I awoke the next morning after an agitated sleep to prepare for my interview at the Tuileries, which had been fixed for ten o'clock. I was punctual to the hour, and having ascended a terrace from the gardens, I proceeded, as directed, up a private staircase, at the top of which was a door carefully guarded by a sentinel, who, eyeing me with eager scrutiny, inquired whom I sought ? I replied that I was desirous of speaking with Madame de Campan, first lady-in-waiting to her majesty. The *garde du corps*, who was evidently apprised of my coming, immediately offered to be my escort, and I followed him almost mechanically, for a singular and unaccountable depression hung over my senses, nor could I for some time rally my spirits. Madame de Campan motioning me to follow, we descended a flight of stairs, and entered an apartment splendidly furnished, at one of the windows of which stood a lady, apparently gazing with deep interest upon some object below. My conductor, having ushered me into the room, retired, and the lady, turning away from the window, revealed to me the features of the queen ! At the sight I fell on my knees, but her majesty approaching, extended her hand with an air of dignified condescension, bidding me, kindly, " Arise."

" Alas ! " cried I, respectfully kissing the royal hand,

"how culpable have I been towards your majesty, but let me humbly trust that my present devotion may be received, and that the expressions of my entire attachment and loyalty will be accepted by my gracious mistress, who may command the heart of her who speaks—in life or death."

"Such sentiments have become somewhat rare," returned Marie Antoinette, "so that," continued that adorable princess, with a sort of melancholy gaiety, "you may reckon upon a first place in the general amnesty I shall shortly publish."

While the queen was speaking, I contemplated with admiring eyes that lovely countenance still so irresistibly charming, spite of the many cares which preyed upon her royal mind; and tears filled my eyes as I recollected the ardour and enthusiasm which attended her first arrival in France. The daughter of Marie Thérèse evidently understood my feelings, for she said, mournfully:

"You see how sadly my motives are misconceived, and how cruelly my enemies have prevailed against one whose most earnest wish was to have promoted the happiness of France. I have been compelled to look for friends beyond this kingdom, and to seek that assistance elsewhere I had hoped to have owed only to my people; for yourself, I requested your presence here that I might entrust an important commission to your zeal."

"Your majesty may freely command me; I swear inviolable fidelity to whatsoever you shall desire."

I availed myself of this opening to speak of the casket of Louis XV, as well as the recent endeavours made to bribe me to disclose what I knew of it. The queen listened with deep interest to my recital, and when I had concluded, said, with a benignant smile:

"I thank you sincerely for so striking a proof of your prudence and devotion, which shall not go unrewarded;

you must hold both the king and myself your debtors, and ere long we will acquit ourselves of the obligation."

I volunteered my services to accompany any person her majesty should appoint to go in search of the precious casket.

"That will not be necessary," replied Marie Antoinette, "and he whom I shall send will, when furnished with your directions, be fully capable of discharging the trust alone."

The queen thanked me for the prompt compliance and alacrity I evinced with the most flattering condescension, and took leave of me in the most gracious manner. She rang, and Madame de Campan entering, her majesty said, "The many and essential services rendered me by the Comtesse du Barri deserve, and have my warmest thanks, and I am happy to have you, madam, as a witness of my grateful sense of them."

I threw myself again at the feet of this adored sovereign, whose hand I kissed and bathed with my tears. "Calm yourself," said Marie Antoinette, "and return home, my kind friend, ere our interview is discovered and misrepresented by the malicious. Adieu, Madame la Comtesse, we shall soon meet again."

I was about to retire, when, from beneath the window of the apartment in which we were, arose a clear and manly voice, singing in a low but clear and distinct tone the following words, which formed one of the verses of a popular romance:

"Dans les jardins de Trianon
Je cherchais des roses nouvelles,
Mais hélas! les fleurs les plus belles
Avaient péri sous l'aquilon.
J'eus beau chercher les dons de Flore,
Les hivers les avaient détruits,
Je ne trouvais que des soucis
Qu'humectaient les pleurs de l'Aurore."

We were still listening, when the queen observed, "'Tis a young man of about eighteen years of age, who comes every day and sings in the same place verses of different songs, each having some reference to myself. I fancied he might be poor, and have sent him money, which he has always refused, and I cannot doubt that this youthful musician employs this method as an assurance of his love for his queen."

As Marie Antoinette pronounced these words in a tone of most thrilling sensibility, her eyes glistened, and her whole countenance was radiant with the delightful consciousness of finding herself an object of affection to one, if but the meanest of her subjects, and amid the hatred and persecutions by which she was surrounded, her feeling mind was soothed and comforted with the humble homage of even an obscure individual.

The next day Madame de Campan came with an intimation from her majesty that the Comte de Fersen, a Swedish gentleman, high in the esteem and friendship of the queen, had visited Versailles disguised in the royal livery, in company with the Maréchal de Mouchy, governor of the Château, and, after a short search, had found the golden casket, which he immediately brought away, sealed with the maréchal's seal, and delivered into the hands of the queen, who, much gratified at obtaining possession of the important documents it contained, had sent to inform me of the circumstance as a small testimony of the confidence she reposed in me. Madame de Campan further told me that all the papers found in the casket had been consigned to the flames, with the exception of a very thick manuscript written in the late king's own hand, and which her majesty had reserved for her private perusal.

I established myself in Paris on the 20th of December, and immediately such of my friends as the political

tempest had not dispersed, hastened to express their delight at still keeping me among them. Included in the number of my visitors was the Marquis de Guichard, for whom I entertained the greatest regard, although I saw him but seldom. Taking me one day aside, he said to me:

"What have you done to offend de Genlis, de Laclos, and those who form the Orleans party? They seem much displeased with you, and I greatly fear their enmity may lead to something fatal; pray endeavour to clear the matter up with them, it is really necessary for your safety you should do so."

I did not entrust M. Guichard with the fact of my having perceived a very striking connexion between the ill-will of the persons alluded to, and my refusal to grant a favourable hearing to the conversation relative to the casket of the late king. On the very next evening I went to the opera, and perceiving M. de Laclos I beckoned to him, and he instantly obeyed my signal.

"What have I done so criminal," inquired I, "that you consider yourself justified in evincing so much displeasure and animosity towards me?"

"Anyone in my place," replied he, "would affect ignorance of your meaning, but I will act with greater sincerity, and confess that I am very angry with you indeed."

"I could not possibly have acted otherwise than I have done," said I. "Tell me, what should you have done in my place?"

"Conducted myself like a woman of good sense. The part you have chosen is perfect folly, and you will too late find the absurdity of it. Your party is rapidly falling lower and lower, while ours is daily rising in fresh strength."

M. de Laclos essayed all his eloquence to win me over to his side, but I stopped him from annoying me with any propositions, by explaining to him that the casket

of the late king had been withdrawn from its hiding-place, by order of Louis XVI, who had, with his own hands, destroyed every paper it contained. M. de Laclos bit his lips.

"And, no doubt," said he, "you have been well paid for your silence respecting it."

"No!" replied I, indignantly; "any mention of recompense would have been an insult my gracious sovereign would never have offered me."

"Wonderful! you will finish, no doubt, by something heroically grand."

"That is to say, I shall end where you begin."

This retort put the finishing stroke to M. de Laclos's ill-humour, and, with an air of constrained gallantry, he bowed and quitted me.

It was not long afterwards that a very serious calamity overtook me. During the night some robbers, profiting by my absence in Paris, and aided no doubt by the Swiss servant to whom I had entrusted the care of Luciennes, stole the whole of my diamonds and other articles of value left there, as in a place of greater safety than Paris was likely to prove during the present troubled state of things. The amount of what I have thus been deprived of cannot be less than 500,000 crowns. I can write no more, I must see what can be done to recover them.

EPILOGUE

The robbery at Luciennes was an even greater catastrophe than Madame du Barri had imagined, for it drew attention to her existence, which had been almost forgotten by the public in the increasing excitement of political events. But the sight of placards announcing a reward of 2000 louis for the recovery of diamonds and other jewels of amazing value served to remind passers-by of this creature of royal favour, whose cupidity and extravagance had done so much to ruin France, and in wine-shops and cafés men began to mutter that steps should be taken to deprive this shameless woman of her ill-won wealth.

About a month after her loss Madame du Barri heard that the thieves had been caught in London, so the next morning she set off for England, accompanied by three servants and two gentlemen as escort. She remained in London a few days, identified her jewels, made arrangement for their safe keeping, gave what news she had to the crowd of *émigrés* who had fled to the English capital, and then hastened back to France.

Meanwhile terrible events were taking place in Paris. With nerves worn to shreds by suspicion, ignorance and dread of it scarce knew what, a fierce mob had stormed the Tuileries, butchered many of the gentlemen who rallied round the king, and taken him prisoner.

Amongst the victims of that dreadful day was Madame du Barri's old lover, the Duc de Brissac-Cossé; and as a reminder of her own precarious position, his bleeding head was cast in all its grim horror upon the table of her salon at Luciennes. A fortnight later she was haled before the Committee of Public Safety, and put to a rigid cross-

examination. But in those earlier days of terror a lovely woman's tears and fears were capable of touching the members' hearts, and with a brief though significant warning to keep out of trouble, she was dismissed.

Still distressed about her stolen diamonds, she went off to England again, where various complications had hindered the magistrates in dealing with the affair. It was during this, Madame du Barri's last visit to London, that Louis XVI went to the scaffold, and the gaunt red arms of the guillotine stretched out to seize all who were even suspected of tenderness for that old regime which had once been the glory of France. The fact of her having gone into mourning for the king during her visit abroad was one of the most damning indictments to be brought up at her trial. In London, she hired a house in Bolton Street, Berkeley Square, which had been furnished in readiness for the reception of Philippe Egalité, the renegade Duke of Orleans, who went instead to the Place de la Revolution. There she lived with other distinguished *émigrés* and mixed in the best English circles. Old enmities were forgotten in the general disaster, and Madame du Barri sat at dinner side by side with the nephew of that great Choiseul whom she had driven from office. She met Pitt on several occasions and talked at length with him about the state of France; he even begged her to stay in England rather than return to certain destruction in Paris, and when they parted gave her a medal struck in his honour—a medal which was produced at her trial to prove her guilty complicity with the hated minister. Perhaps she would have accepted his invitation to stay had it not been for her fortune and estates in France; but the memory of Luciennes, and the news that the Convention had put seals upon her effects there, drew her back to her own country, whither she returned early in 1793.

During her absence abroad one of those vile adventurers spewed up by every revolution had cast the eyes of cupidity upon the estate of Luciennes. This was George Grieve, a Newcastle man, who had been to America, where he claimed friendship with Washington and Franklin, and had now come to France, claiming to represent unofficially the American Republic in Revolutionary circles. Lust of blood or money made him fasten on Madame du Barri with the pertinacity of a terrier. While she was in England he took lodgings in Luciennes, wormed his way into the Château, and bribed Zamor and another servant to search for the hiding-place where their mistress had secured her wealth. But Madame du Barri had taken the precaution to bury or otherwise conceal the most valuable of her effects; so, disappointed of his prey, Grieve took advantage of the Law of Suspects to denounce her as an aristocrat. At the head of the municipal authorities he forced his way into her chamber, arrested her, and bore her away to Versailles, where she was cast into gaol.

But the inhabitants of Luciennes protested strongly. Madame la Comtesse had made herself popular in the neighbourhood, and even good patriots who disapproved of her were nauseated at the vileness of Grieve. A petition was got up and presented to the Committee of Public Safety, who ordered her immediate release.

Grieve was not the man to let his victim escape so easily, especially when she was a woman. Not for nothing did he pride himself on being "the friend of Marat." Again he laid himself out to win the confidence of Zamor, that negro servant whom Madame du Barri had cherished since her childhood and had loaded with so many favours. The Revolution had made Zamor a man, treason turned him into a citizen. He took Judas Iscariot as the type of a true patriot, and in his enthusiasm

for liberty sold his mistress to her enemy. She discovered his treason and drove him from her, vowing she would never set eyes on him again ; but she was to see him once more, at the Revolutionary Tribunal, where his evidence, more than that of any other witness, sent her to the guillotine.

Insults and annoyances now became part of her daily life. Threats from the Jacobin Club of Luciennes, visitations, inquiries, perquisitions, succeeded one another, all guided by the sure touch of that master-hand which was building up evidence that should lead the wretched woman to her doom. Yet in the midst of all these troubles she could find time for love. Though she was near her fiftieth birthday she still possessed alluring beauty, and de Brissac's bloody head had hardly been borne from her sight ere she was involved in a liaison with Prince Rohan Rochefort. Cosway's miniature, painted during her last visit to London, reveals something of the charm that captured the hearts of so many men.

Meanwhile the indefatigable Grieve made an inventory of Madame du Barri's wealth, denounced her yet again to the Convention, and on 22nd September, accompanied by the Mayor of Luciennes, two gendarmes and several other functionaries, once more forced his way into her boudoir, arrested her, and personally took her to the prison of Sainte Pelagie, in Paris.

In the state the public mind had been worked up to it was not difficult to make out an accusation against a former royal mistress. Her associations with the Court were too well known to need any confirmation of her aristocratical leanings. The medal Pitt had given her was clear testimony of treasonable friendship with the Republic's enemies, and the revelations of Zamor added to the fatal list of her iniquities. So, on the 2nd Frimaire (22nd November) she was taken from Sainte Pelagie to

be questioned by Dumas, the bloody vice-president of the Revolutionary Tribunal, in presence of that yet more sinister monster Fouquier-Tinville.

Grieve poured out his venom in lengthy evidence; Saleneve, one of her trusted servants, described her friendship with numbers of aristocrats; Zamor spoke to the same effect; others hastened to the witness-stand, each eager to cast a stone at the doomed woman, and a few days later she was definitely committed for trial and sent to the Conciergerie, where fate ordained that she should occupy the same room that Marie Antoinette had vacated so shortly before, when she went to the scaffold. There Madame du Barri learned that Zamor had received his thirty pieces of silver, in the shape of her old seigneurie of Luciennes.

At nine o'clock on the morning of 16 Frimaire, year II (6 December 1793) the members of the Revolutionary Tribunal took their seats. Dumas was in the president's chair, and facing him sat the terrible figure of Fouquier-Tinville, public prosecutor. Madame du Barri and several other prisoners to be tried on the same count were brought forward, accompanied by Lafleutrie, who had the formal and futile task of acting as counsel for the defence.

Said Dumas: "You, accused, seated in that chair, what are your names, age, profession, place of birth, and residence?"

Madame du Barri answered: "Jeanne Vaubernier, aged forty-two (she was really fifty), living on my income, dwelling at Luciennes."

"Are you not the wife of the *ci-devant* Comte du Barri?"

"We were legally separated."

This formality over, Fouquier-Tinville began his speech for the prosecution. Starting with the unhappy woman's

career during the reign of Louis XV, he then went on to describe how this "Aspasia of the French Sardanapalus" had given asylum to aristocrats, assisted *émigrés*, corresponded and spoken "avec l'infame Pitt, cet ennemi implacable du genre humain," and had the temerity to bring back a medal bearing the monster's effigy. In conclusion he touched upon the wealth she had acquired —wrung from an oppressed populace.

Grieve's evidence followed: the substance of it may well be imagined. Saleneve, Zamor, *femmes de chambre*, servants, casual acquaintances, then came forward with the eager anxiety of those who knew that the slightest inflexion of a word in the woman's favour would be but the prelude to sitting by her side on the benches of the accused.

Lafleutrie's defence was scarcely listened to. Dumas summed up against "la courtisane du prédécesseur de Louis XVI," and the jury honoured her by devoting to her case fifteen minutes' longer consideration than that of Marie Antoinette had cost their consciences. But none the less surely they returned a verdict of guilty, and she was condemned to death.

And far away in Toulouse, at that very time, the guillotine had just shorn away the life of Comte Jean, the author of her splendour and her fall.

At this sudden climax to her misfortunes Madame du Barri lost the dignity and calm she had maintained throughout her trial. When she realized that all was finished, when she saw the witnesses rubbing their hands in patriotic glee, when she found that not one of the thousands who had courted her and grovelled before her in the days of her splendour would now say a good word for her, she sank back in a dead faint and was taken so ill that for a time the public were stricken for fear lest she should not last long enough to mount the scaffold.

She was brought round in the prison, however, and with an overwhelming, passionate desire to live, no matter at what cost, began a series of revelations compromising every one whose life, she hoped, might be taken in exchange for her own. All she said was noted down and stored in the memories of the judges before whom she made her depositions. More than one innocent went to the guillotine on the strength of her words, but not one additional minute of life did she purchase with this spate of denunciation.

In those days of the Terror sex had no longer any relation to courage. Condemned like men, women died like men; they even seemed jealous of the right of dying, appearing to mount the scaffold as though it were the gateway to glory. All had the strength of religion, of a principle, a faith, a duty, of something, in short, that sustained the soul and stilled all fear in those last dread moments. Madame du Barri had nothing of this to help her in the hour of death; throughout her butterfly life she had banished every thought of those greater things that comfort and succour *in hora mortis nostræ*.

After a fevered night, when hopes and fears chased across her mind in wild disorder, they dragged her forth from the prison. White as the dress that had been forced upon her, she mounted the cart, still madly hoping that a reprieve would come. Her beautiful hair had been shorn, those silken curls that Louis had loved to fondle had been clumsily hacked away, and a deathly pallor masked the face that had held in thrall so many lovers.

The streets were densely packed with men and women anxious to see the end of this unhappy creature. In the front row of the spectators, as the cart moved from the prison, stood Grieve, who gleefully observed, "I have never laughed so much in my life; look at the grimaces that —— makes at the idea of dying!" As the cart drew

slowly out into the crowded street the people pressed round it to feast their eyes on this darling of the late tyrant. But the object they all stared at heard and saw nothing. Her pale lips moved unintelligibly, and she seemed unaware of her companions in misfortune, seated by her side, who tried to inspire her with enough courage to meet death with dignity.

Suddenly, as they passed the Palais Royal, Madame du Barri raised her eyes and saw the dressmaker's shop where she had worked so many years ago. The well-known windows were crowded with working-girls, happy and young as she had once been, all staring with curiosity. Overcome at the sight, she uttered a piercing shriek that rang through the Rue St Honoré from end to end. The executioner and his two assistants caught the struggling woman in their arms and it took their united strength to keep her in the cart, so violent were the convulsions of fear that overtook her. Then, to violence and shrieks succeeded tears and supplications for mercy. Leaning over the edge of the cart, her shorn locks hanging forlornly over her forehead, her eyes starting in crazy terror, she whispered to those in the crowd who were nearest: "Friends, save me! I have never harmed a soul! For heaven's sake, save me!"

The onlookers were amazed. Accustomed to seeing aristocrats driving to the guillotine with an air of bravado, or at least composure, this demonstration of weakness seemed to make them realize for the first time that they were about to kill a woman.

"Life! Life! Give me my life! I will give all my money to the nation!" she implored.

"Your money! You will be but giving the nation what belongs to it already," jeered a bystander; but a neighbouring coal-heaver silenced him with a heavy blow on the mouth.

At last the cart clattered into the Place de la Revolution, and up to the scaffold, where stood the blood-red guillotine. It was half-past four in the afternoon. Madame du Barri was the first to descend. She was dragged up the ladder to the platform, demented with anguish and terror.

"One minute, *monsieur le bourreau!*" she cried, but it was to deaf or callous ears. The executioner threw her roughly to her knees, forced her slender neck into the fatal slot, and she was still shrieking "Help! Help!" when the great blade fell.

INDEX

A

Adélaïde, Princess, daughter of Louis XV, 36, 38, 44, 224
Aiguillon, Duc d' :
protects Madame du Barri, 36 ; parliaments opposed to, 39 ; arranges Madame du Barri's presentation, 43 ; plots against Choiseul, 63, 67, 73 ; hatred of, 77 ; and Choiseul's dismissal, 96 ; appointed foreign minister, 100 ; advice on Court intrigues, 117 ; and poison plot, 151 ; and plots against himself, 183 ; hatred of Cossé Brissac, 193, 197 ; and Chassé the singer, 207 ; opposition to Maupeou, 214 ; after Louis's death, 232 ; his disgrace, 236
Alembert, d', 12
Aloigny, Comtesse d', 43, 46
Arc, Chevalier d', 15
Artois, Comte d' (Charles X), 108, 218, 260, 262, 268, 281
Aubuisson, Comte d', 8
Aumont, Duc d', 124
Ayen, Duc d', 46, 58

B

Bagatelle, 263
Bailly, Mayor of Paris, 282
Bastille, fall of, 280
Bearn, Comtesse de, 42, 46
Beaumarchais, Caron de, 13, 124
Bellevue, 112
Bernis, Cardinal de, 182
Bertin, M., 40, 46
Besenval, Baron de, 279
Billard du Monceau, M., 1, 3, 4
Blagnac, a valet, 169
Bohemer, the Court jeweller, 45, 239, 242
Boisgelin, Abbé de, 246
Bompart, Mère, 85
Breteuil, Baron de, 241
Brienne, Comtesse de, 261
Broglie, Comte de, 70, 120, 279
Brunoy, 270

C

Cabert, a Swiss conspirator, 156, 158
Cagliostro, Count, 239, 243
Campan, Madame de, 98, 283, 285
Carracioli, Signor, 166
Casket of Louis XV, 284, 288
Catherine, Empress of Russia, 122
Céline, 245, 250, 273
Cerneuil, Madame de, 242
Chamilly, groom to Louis XV, 127, 133, 141, 142, 188, 209
Chanteloup, 94, 97
Chantilly, 51, 52
Charles Auguste Christian, Prince, 66, 67
Chartres, Duc de, 262
Chassé, the singer, 206
Châtelet, Comte du, 111
Chauvelin, Marquis de, 122
Choiseul, Duc de :
influence, v ; opposition to Madame du Barri, 33, 40 ; reproached for this by Louis, 46 ; supports Marie Antoinette, 55 ; visits Madame du Barri, 61 ; plots against, 67 ; recalls his

sister, 72; excuses himself from Bed of Justice, 75; popularity for this, 77; generosity of, 92; dismissed from office, 94; exiled, 97
Choisy, 232
Chon (Fanchon du Barri), 35, 38, 113, 178, 186, 211, 234
Cleophile, 213
Condé, Prince de, 50, 52, 143, 181, 212, 216, 281
Conti, Prince de, 119, 281
Conti, Princesse de, 115
Conzié, Bishop of Arras, 97
Cossé Brissac, Duc de, 88; courts Madame du Barri, 193; interview with her, 197; with Madame du Barri after king's death, 232; loyalty to her, 235; affair with Céline, 245; takes Madame du Barri to Bagatelle, 263; at outbreak of Revolution, 279; death of, 235 *note*, 291
Cossé Brissac, Duchesse de, 199, 201

D

Dauphin, *see* Louis XVI
Deffant, Madame du, 101, 166
Descampativos, games, 262
Diderot, the writer, 12, 122
Dorothée, *élève* at Parc-aux-Cerfs, 187
Du Barri, Adolphe, 138
Du Barri, Fanchon, *see* Chon
Du Barri, Guillaume, husband of Madame, 34, 160, 178
Du Barri, Jean:
character, 17; ambitions, 20; secures introduction of Madame du Barri to the king, 22 *et seq.*; arranges her marriage, 35; and her presentation, 43, 46; and Parc-aux-Cerfs, 86; dispute with Marin, 125; spies on king's amours, 128; plans to supply him with new lovers, 130; marriage for his son, 138; lust for money, 160; forestalls a plot, 164; at Parc-aux-Cerfs, 187; seeks diversion for Louis, 206; leaves Paris after king's death, 230; return, 248; visits Céline, 251; guillotined, 296
Du Barri, Marie-Jeanne, Comtesse: beauty of, vi, 3, 294; *Memoirs*, vii; birth, 1; childhood, 3; moves to Paris, *ibid.*; apprenticed to a milliner, 5; first love affair, 6; new lovers, 9; sent to Madame Lagarde, 10; liaison with two brothers, 11; gay life in Paris, 15; amour with Comte Jean du Barri, 17; schemes to become king's mistress, 20; goes to Versailles and meets king, 27; installed as mistress, 32; Louis's infatuation, *ibid.*; married to Guillaume du Barri, 36; animosity of royal family towards, 38; alliance with Maupeou and d'Aiguillon, 40; presentation at Court, 40, 45; enmity with Choiseul, 47, 61; friendship with Madame de Mirepoix, 48; triumph at Chantilly, 52; quarrel with Duchesse de Grammont, 57, 58; friendship with d'Aiguillon, 67; plots disgrace of Choiseul, 68; surprise visit to a Court function, 87; secures fall of Choiseul, 94; and promotion of d'Aiguillon, 100; entertains Swedish prince, 104; antagonism towards Marie Antoinette, 110; fear of being supplanted, 127; interferes in king's amour, 131; schemes for her nephew's marriage, 139; discovers plot against the king, 147; fresh difficulties with king's lovers, 162; meets her husband, 178; seeks

divorce, 180; chooses lover for Louis, 187; meets Duc de Cossé Brissac, 193; his love for her, 198; tries to amuse the king, 204; helps *élève* at Parc-aux-Cerfs, 211; discovers plots against her, 213; at wedding of Comte d'Artois, 218; domestic scenes with king, 221; king's amour with Julie, 225; at king's death-bed, 228; banished from Court, 230; retires to convent, 234; to Pont Vrain, 236; to Luciennes, 237; and diamond necklace, 239; jealousy of Duc de Cossé Brissac, 245; interviews Céline, 254; visits Bagatelle, 263; discovers plot to give Louis XVI a mistress, 270; sees Duchesse de Grammont, 275; at outbreak of Revolution, 280; visited by Madame Campan, 283; sees Marie Antoinette, 285; is robbed, 290; goes to London, 291; enmity of Grieve, 293; arrested and tried by Revolutionary Tribunal, 294; her death, 296
Dubois, Cardinal, 82
Dubreuil, Madame, 1
Dudelay, M., 11, 13
Dumas, president of tribunal, 295
Dumerval, Madame, 183
Durand, minister in Russia, 124
Duras, Duc de, 46, 105, 123, 137, 167, 171
Durfort, M. de, 81

E

Élèves of the Parc-aux-Cerfs, 83
Enghien, Duc d', 281
Escars, Comte d', 80
Estissac, Duc d', 81

F

Falloni, an intriguer, 120
Flavacourt, Madame de, 171
Fleury, Cardinal de, 168
Fleury, Duc de, 80
Fontainebleau, 194
Forcalquier, Madame de, 259
Fouquier-Tinville, 295
Frederic II, king of Prussia, 28
Fronsac, Duc de, 80
Fumel, Madame de, 162

G

Geraud, Archbishop and nuncio, 100
Gomart, Père Ange, 3, 4, 5, 10
Gonesse, Baron, *see* Louis XV
Grammont, Duchesse de: hatred of Madame du Barri, 33-35; influence over Choiseul, 47; publicly insults Madame du Barri, 57, 58; is exiled, 59; recalled, 69, 71; haughty behaviour, 77; interferes in scheme against Louis XVI, 274
Grieve, George, 293, 297
Grimm, M. de, 12
Gueménée, Princesse de, 50
Guichard, Marquis de, 289
Guimard, Mademoiselle, 21, 136 137
Gustavus III, of Sweden, 103

H

Hargicourt, Comte d', 163
Harpe, M. de la, 21
Henriette, Madame du Barri's maid, 18, 25, 31, 151, 190, 194, 253
Hôpital, Madame de l', 61

I

Iron Mask, Man with the, 53

J

Jarente, Bishop of Orleans, 98, 99, 124
Jesuits, 122, 149, 155, 158
Julie, *élève* at Parc-aux-Cerfs, 225
Justine, 271

L

Labille, Madame, 5, 8
Laborde, M. de, 136
Laclos, M. de, 289
Lafleutrie, lawyer, 295, 296
Lagarde, M. de, 11, 13
Lagarde, Madame de, 10, 14
Lamballe, Princesse de, 186
Lambesc, Prince de, 260, 281
Lamothe-Langnon, viii
Lançon, Mlle, *see* Du Barri, Comtesse
Lebel, valet of Louis XV, v, vi, 22, 23, 25, 27, 31, 32, 34, 82
Lebon, the jeweller, 219
Linguet, an advocate, 181
Lorimer, Madame, 148, 157
Louis XIV, 55 *note*
Louis XV and Madame de Pompadour, v; his character, 28; meets Madame du Barri, 29; infatuation, 31, 33, 50, 53; fondness for nicknames, 36; fear of public opinion, *ibid.*; promises Madame du Barri's presentation at Court, 41; his behaviour thereon, 46; discussion with Choiseul, 47; with Madame de Mirepoix, 49; anger with daughter, 51; discusses Man with Iron Mask, 54; and Marie Antoinette, 56; exiles Duchesse de Grammont, 58; recalls her, 71; learns of plot against Choiseul, 72; flouts parliament, 76; his intimate suppers, 80; his youth, 82; and Mme de Valentinois' fête, 91; examines letters in the post, 93; dismisses Choiseul, 95; receives Swedish prince, 103; on Court intrigues, 117; dislike of Prince de Conti, 119; dislike of contradiction, 122; seeks distraction, 126; intrigue with Madame de Rumas, 128; pension to Mlle Guimard, 137; his illegitimate children, 139; arranges marriage of Adolphe du Barri, 144; conspiracy to poison him, 148; his dissembling nature, 168; and Abbé Terray's daughter, 185; rebuffed by Dorothée, 188, 189; suffers from ennui, 204; hears of plot against Madame du Barri, 215; affection for Comte d'Artois, 218; likes cooking, 221; his suppers at Madame du Barri's, 222; behaviour to his daughter, 224; visits to Parc-aux-Cerfs, 224; infatuation with Julie, 225; his fear of death, 227; death, 229
Louis XVI (the Dauphin), 66, 108, 237, 244, 270, 281, 292
Louise, Madame, daughter of Louis XV, 37, 38, 44
Luciennes, Château, 52, 65, 221, 237, 259, 291, 293

M

Madame (d'Orleans), 269
Maillebois, Comte de, 71
Marche, Comte de la, 53, 66, 212, 216
Marie Antoinette, Queen: marriage to Dauphin, 55; arrival at Versailles, 56; reception of

Madame du Barri, 57; dislike of Prince Max, 66; at a Court party, 90; deplores fall of Choiseul, 98; Madame du Barri's jealousy of, 110; receives a diamond aigrette, 219; the diamond necklace affair, 237; plays at Versailles, 262; criticisms of, 263; a bad actress, 268; dislike of Monsieur, 269; meets Madame du Barri, 285; death, 295, 296
Marie Louise, of Savoy, Princess, 107
Marin, the gazetteer, 125, 134
Marly, 50, 193
Marmontel, the writer, 11
Marsan, Princesse de, 50
Martinière, la, physician, 152, 225
Mathon, Geneviève, 5, 6
Mathon, Nicolas, 6
Maupeou, Chancellor: courts Madame du Barri's favour, 39; arranges her presentation, 42, 46; claims cousinship, 52; plots against Choiseul, 67, 73; reads king's message to parliament, 76; and Choiseul's dismissal, 94; advice on Court intrigues, 116; and poison plot, 153; quarrel and reconciliation with Madame du Barri, 209
Maximilian Joseph, Prince, 66
Mesmer, 259
Mirepoix, Maréchale de, 48, 78, 89, 90, 102, 126, 130, 134, 143, 147, 165, 175, 182, 193, 204, 281
Monaco, Princesse de, 143, 146, 180, 216, 248
Monsieur (Duc d'Orleans), 269, 292
Montesquieu, Marquis de, 113
Morand, M., 21, 23, 42
Morlière, Chevalier de la, 15
Motte Valois, Madame de la, 243, 244
Mousquetaires, the, 9

N

Necklace, the diamond, 237
Noblin, Ursule, 208, 211
Noel, a lover, 13

O

Oigny, Baron d', 93, 170
Olivia, 243

P

Pandora, an opera, 137
Parc-aux-Cerfs, v, 24, 82, 186, 187, 211, 224
Pater, Madame, 163
Petit Saint, Le, see Vrillière, Duc de
Pitt, William, 292
Place Royal, Paris, 3, 298
Planta, Baron de, 243
Poix, Prince de, 122
Polignac, Mesdames de, 268, 281
Pompadour, Madame de, v, 37, 48, 71, 86, 205
Pont aux Dames, abbey, 234
Praslin, M. de, 95
Provence, Comte de (Louis XVIII), 107, 113
Provence, Comtesse de, 87

Q

Quesnay, Court physician, 152, 157

R

Radix de Sainte-Foix, M., 16
Renage, Madame de, 4
Richelieu, Duc de, 33, 40, 46, 64, 70, 86, 124, 130, 136, 206
Roche Aymon, Cardinal de la, 99, 175

Rohan, Cardinal, 238, 244
Rose et Colas, a play, 89
Rubert, Brigitte, 5
Rubi, Mademoiselle de, 78
Rue des Petits-Champs, Paris, 17
Rue du Temple, Paris, 128
Rue Saint Honoré, Paris, 5, 6, 298
Rumas, Madame de, 128

S

Saint Alban, Madame, 270
Saint André, Mlle, 139
Sainte-Aure Convent, 4
Saint-Florentin, Comte de, 82, 126, 152
Saint Vrain, 236
Salenave, 296
Salm, Prince de, 21
Sartines, M. de, lieutenant of police, 34, 120, 128, 134, 152, 153, 159, 170
Scheffer, Comte, 104, 105
Serre, Comte de, *see* Du Barri, Comte Jean
Sophie, Princess, daughter of Louis XV, 36, 44, 224
Soubise, Prince de, 15, 16, 46, 93, 96, 122, 136, 143, 146, 212, 216
Soulot, farmer-general, 246
Sudermania, Duke of, 104
Sugère, Baron de, 240, 245, 266

T

Terigny, Prince de, 80
Terray, Abbé, comptroller-general, 40, 70, 117, 182, 184, 210, 246
Theatricals, at Versailles, 268
Titles, abolition of, 282
Toulouse, 179, 296
Tour du Pin la Choise, Marquis de la, 142
Tournon, Mademoiselle de, 143
Trimouille, Duc de la, 46

V

Valentinois, Comtesse de, 87, 90, 216
Vallière, Mademoiselle de la, 55 *note*, 81
Vandemont, Princesse de, 260
Vaubernier family, 1
Vaucouleurs, 1
Vauguyon, Duc de, 66, 70, 81, 108
Vauguyon, Madame de la, 89, 90
Verrière, Demoiselles, 15
Versailles, 8, 27, 32, 45, 55, 74, 259
Victoire, Princess, daughter of Louis XV, 36, 44, 224
Villequier, Duchesse de, 262
Villeroi, Duchess de, 9, 82
Voltaire, M. de, 12, 122
Vrillière, Duc de la, 70, 93, 94, 97, 152, 155, 157, 232

W

Walpole, Horace, 102

Y

Yon, M., 139, 141

Z

Zamor, negro servant, 64, 220, 293, 294

Made and Printed by the Replika Process in Great Britain by
Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd.
3 Amen Corner, London, E.C.4
and at Bradford

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
Los Angeles
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

[illegible] D LD-URL

OCT 26 1985

FEB 07 1992